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MEMORANDUM

TO: CBJ Assembly Committee of the Whole
FROM: Scott Ciambor, Chief Housing Officer

DATE: September 11, 2017
SUBJECT: Housing & Homeless Information for Task Force

The following information was requested by the taskforce for the September 12th, 2017 Homeless Task Force Meeting:

1. **National & Local Data:** Additional data on the impacts of the homeless population on the community and costs of services was requested. Or, information that helps look at costs the community will incur if investment into the JCHH proposals are not made.
2. **Campground:** Pared-down list of campground options
3. **Juneau Coalition on Housing and Homelessness Proposals:**
 - o Scattered Site Housing First
 - o Assertive Community Treatment Team
 - o Warming Center
4. **CBJ Housing and Homeless Services Coordinator**

National Data and Resources

Nationally, research and data indicate that it is more expensive for communities to do nothing to improve the housing and healthcare options of chronically homeless individuals than to provide adequate housing and supports.

- Malcolm Gladwell's *New Yorker* essay, [Million-Dollar Murray](#) describes this approach.
- Data and research back up the approach and the Center for Supportive Housing has compiled and summarized [32 supportive housing studies](#) that indicate that supportive housing improves lives, generates significant cost savings to public systems, and benefits communities.

Local Costs/Impacts

To prepare for the 2016 CBJ Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for the Juneau Housing First Collaborative project, the following data was collected on costs/impact of the chronic homeless population. **Requests have been made to update this data.**

- **Juneau Police Department/Capital City Fire and Rescue:** Juneau Police Department and Capital City Fire and Rescue report that in less than nine months this year (*January 1 through September 16, 2016*), they've made 537 alcohol incapacitation responses and 83 drug abuse responses with the majority of calls dealing with persons experiencing homelessness; and
- **Bartlett Regional Hospital** had 85 patients that visited the Emergency Room 10 or more times during the first nine months of this year (*January 1 through September 30, 2016*) for a total of 1,507 visits. 33 of those patients were identified as homeless and accounted for 719 of the 1,507 ER visits. Total cost of the ER visits for the homeless patients was \$2,625,290. If you extrapolate this to include the last three months of the year the total would be \$3,412,877 or \$9,350 per day. This works out to an average for the 33 homeless patients of \$103,420 per patient per year.

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These costs are a glimpse of overall cost to public systems (criminal justice, emergency shelter, and other services) as well as impacts on other CBJ departments.

Vulnerability Index Survey – May 2017

In May 2017 partner agencies surveyed all potential future residents of the Juneau Housing First Collaborative project to identify the first set of residents. The aggregate data shows that there were way more than 32 prospective clients and additional supportive housing strategies were needed.

Summary

- **Total number of individuals:** 97 (unsheltered + emergency shelter)
- **Average length of homelessness:** 99.03 months. Median: 60 months
- **Average VI-SPDAT score:** 10.7. Median: 11.

VI-SPDAT scores are on a 0-17 scale.

Any score above 8 is considered a Housing First Candidate.

Evaluation

The JHFC Board has arranged an evaluation of the JHFC project over a three-year period once it opens. The components of the evaluation will be as follows:

1. Frequency of service usage like ER, hospitalizations, police contacts, community mental health services, primary care, substance abuse treatment, etc., pre- and post- admission to housing;
2. Perceived impacts on wellbeing from the resident's perspective;
3. Perceived impacts on the community from those living and working in the downtown area;
4. Objective pre and post changes in well-being based on the Alaska Screening Tool and Client Status Review; and
5. Use of a waitlist control group to compare indicators of well-being among this group to HF residents.

The lead on the evaluation will be Heidi Brocius, MSW. PhD, Clinical Professor, UAF Department of Social Work, who will utilize a student research team to conduct qualitative interviews with residents and community members.

Recommendation: National and local data make it safe to assume that the lack of intervention, especially for chronic homeless persons with complex needs, is at least as expensive or likely more expensive than identifying, housing, and providing supports for these individuals. With the May 2017 Vulnerability Index information, it is clear that the community has this need beyond the 32 spots coming available with the opening of Housing First permanent supportive housing.

CAMPGROUND

After consideration of campground options and the discussion about the target population (unsheltered homeless) that the taskforce is trying to assist, campground options are not the best response.

- Vulnerability Index/Housing First survey data (May 2017) indicate the unsheltered homeless population has complex needs (mental illness/substance abuse, physical/mental disabilities, etc.) and the likelihood of this population utilizing an additional campsite is minimal.

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- This population needs supportive services and no local service agencies would be interested in managing or providing supportive services in this environment. This was attempted when Thane Campground was originally established (CBJ and St. Vincent DePaul partnership) and wasn't a good fit.
- If a campground were established, it would have to be CBJ managed.
- However, if the desire is to provide another low-cost camping environment for the general population, then further consideration of the sites below could be considered. *This would require CBJ funding and staffing.*

CBJ Properties

Other than extending the closing date of Thane Campground, each of the CBJ options left have serious downsides.

- **Thane Campground:** *Extend closing date to November 15, 2017.*
- Lemon Creek Gravel Pit: access, industrial
- Cope Park: access, neighborhood concerns, children's park, damp and dark
- Near Bartlett Regional Hospital: access, steep, ventilation systems of healthcare facilities
- Industrial Boulevard: transportation, access, industrial

AJT Mining Properties (AJ Millsite - Adjacent to downtown Tram)

Included in the packet is a cost estimate for a *winter campground only* discussion that took place last spring that would involve leasing the land from AJT Mining Properties, constructing and removing the site pads between tourist season end in Fall and the start in Spring. **Estimated Charge for materials and construction: \$15,891** (*This does not include labor costs*) This option would require CBJ funding, staffing, and operation. Additionally, there are questions to be considered about police and fire ability to respond, snowplowing, and vehicle access for garbage and port-a-potties.

Recommendation: As a winter campground is unlikely to assist the most in need, CBJ should put resources toward the Juneau Coalition on Housing and Homelessness proposals.

Juneau Coalition on Housing and Homelessness (JCHH) Proposals:

At the last taskforce meeting, the JCHH provided a number of proposals to address the unsheltered homeless situation. In your packet there are templates with additional details on each proposal.

- Scattered Site Housing First
- Warming Center
- Assertive Community Treatment Team – (For information on an ACT team and the standards for implementing a program, [please look at the Alaska DHSS website.](#))

Recommendation: The first two options are actionable and can likely be put into place in the short-term. The Assertive Community Treatment Team is more medium-term and will require more organizational and capacity-building conversations. The taskforce should consider approving funding for both the scattered site housing option and the warming center and pursue organizing details with partners immediately.

CBJ Housing and Homeless Services Coordinator

On September 7, 2017 the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority approved a \$100,000 FY18 partnership grant request to the City and Borough of Juneau for the Housing and Homelessness Services Coordinator. The grant request is included in the meeting packet and awaits Assembly approval on Sept. 18th.

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The position will be in place to serve a couple of primary functions; 1) provide staff and assembly support in developing oversight and policy in regards to housing and services for the homeless and 2) coordinate with agencies that make up the Juneau Coalition on Housing and Homelessness to further enhance the housing and homelessness service delivery system.

Final Recommendation: The Homeless Task Force can forward recommendations to the Assembly and complete its work. Also, with the Coordinator staff position available, the Assembly will be able to receive updates on these issues going forward.