

# Bridge Housing Communities Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Updated 12/13/2018

On September 27, 2016, AB 2176, authored by Assembly member Nora Campos, was signed into law by Governor Jerry Brown. AB 2176 amended the Shelter Crisis Act and authorized a five-year pilot program allowing the City of San José to create BHC's for the homeless, in conjunction with: 1) a shelter crisis declaration; 2) adoption of an ordinance establishing local building, health, and safety standards, and; 3) compliance with other terms of the bill including transition plans for each resident. This includes temporary housing in new or existing structures on City-owned or City-leased property.

On December 8, 2018, the City of San José's Housing Department released a memorandum with recommendations on the final site selection, development, and operations of Bridge Housing Communities (BHC) that will be considered at the December 18, 2018 City Council Meeting. This memorandum and supporting documents can be found at:

BHC Webpage - <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/index.aspx?NID=5609>

This FAQ is being provided to answer many of the questions that the City has received to date. This updated FAQ includes responses to new questions and updates to relevant older question.

## Cost

**Q: *What is the cost of a Bridge Housing Community?***

A: On December 12, 2017, the Housing Department provided initial cost projections to the City Council to consider development options in the pursuit of BHC. The development and construction costs at that time were based on conceptual designs. The designs were developed before the BHC sites were selected. Since the December meeting, staff has worked with Habitat for Humanity and other development partners to develop the building and development standards, refine the site and cabin designs, and investigate utility requirements and costs for each of the two sites. Based on the final designs and new standards, the cost of development and construction is estimated to be approximately \$2,150,000 per site. The Table below provides a cost summary for the revised design and comparison with the preliminary estimates provided last December.

<i>Development</i>	<i>Preliminary Cost Projections</i>	<i>Revised Cost Per Site (40 Cabins)</i>
<b>Direct Development and Construction Cost</b>		
Site Development	\$1,775,000	\$990,000
Community Facility Buildings	\$400,000	\$300,000
Emergency Sleeping Cabins	\$750,000	\$260,000
General Conditions	<b>Included in Site Development</b>	\$280,000
Total Construction	<b>\$2,925,000</b>	<b>\$1,830,000</b>
<b>Indirect Development and Construction Cost</b>		
Habitat Overhead	<b>Not included</b>	\$320,000
Total Development		<b>\$2,150,000</b>
Construction Contingency	<b>Not Included</b>	\$430,000
Total Development with Contingency		<b>\$2,580,000</b>

# Bridge Housing Communities

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### Updated 12/13/2018

#### ***Q: What are the primary cost elements of constructing Bridge Housing?***

A: The primary cost elements of developing a Bridge Housing Community are Construction of the 40 emergency sleeping cabins, construction of the community support facilities for the residents, and the site development costs. These elements are briefly description below.

- 1) *Emergency Sleeping Cabin costs* – The cost of constructing 40 emergency sleeping cabins through the volunteer efforts of Habitat for Humanity is approximately \$6,500 per cabin. Under the BHC pilot, each cabin is designed to accommodate 1 adult. Cabin construction is the smallest expense in the development of BHC
- 2) *Community space* – In addition to providing emergency sleeping cabins, the Housing Department is proposing to include portable buildings at each site that will provide residents and staff with fully accessible restrooms, showers, and a basic community kitchen, as well as meeting space for residents, staff, and service providers. The community space is essential to the health and safety of the residents and surrounding community as well as the overall success of the BHC.
- 3) *Site development costs* – This cost is associated with preparing the land to accommodate the BHC. These costs include bringing water, electricity, sewer, and other utilities from the street to the site as well as grading and clearing the site to accommodate a BHC. These costs would be required for any type of interim community. As with the emergency sleeping cabin costs, staff anticipate these costs being significantly reduced with the actual sites identified and thoroughly analyzed.

#### ***Q: Why not just use utility sheds like other communities?***

A. Every jurisdiction must assess the needs of their community and determine the best approach to address the range of complex challenges it faces. The City of San José's approach to interim housing is to provide a healthy, safe, and dignified living environment for its residents.

Although utility sheds may provide a slightly less expensive alternative, these types of structures do not provide some basic human needs such heat, adequate ventilation, and fire safety protections. The Housing Department believes basic utility sheds are insufficient to provide the desired level of health, safety and dignity to the residents and surrounding neighborhood. Additionally, under the AB 2176 legislation, San José's Bridge Housing must include basic health and safety requirements.

#### ***Q: Wouldn't it be cheaper to buy utility sheds and modify them to meet the requirements of AB 2176?***

A. Several other cities have taken this approach. While the modified utility sheds would require habitability upgrades like insulation, low voltage lighting, upgraded entry door, and bigger windows for added light and ventilation, these upgrades still do not meet some of the basic needs required under AB 2176. The additional upgrades required to meet AB 2176 that are not currently provided in the modified sheds include, hard wired smoke detectors, electrical heat source, at least one power outlet, and one

# Bridge Housing Communities

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### Updated 12/13/2018

electrically powered interior light. Additionally, the City's proposed cabins include resilient wall and floor coverings for added sanitation. Thanks to the efforts of Habitat for Humanity and their volunteer labor model, each Bridge Housing Communities cabin is estimated to cost approx. \$6,500. The modified utility sheds used in other communities, as described above, is approx. \$6,600 per unit.

***Q: Has the City explored other types of short term housing options such as RV's or FEMA Trailers?***

A: YES – City staff evaluated the feasibility of several temporary housing types and models. Many of these options are listed in the December 12, 2017 memorandum located at:

<http://www.sanjoseca.gov/index.aspx?NID=5611>

Regardless of the housing type selected, site development would be required to support the units and some level of community facilities would be required. Given the low production cost of emergency sleeping cabins at \$6,500 per cabin, this is less expensive than most other types of temporary housing.

## Life in the BHC

BHC Webpage - <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/index.aspx?NID=5609>

**Q: Who will hold the third-party vendors accountable for how the facility is run?**

A: HomeFirst Services of Santa Clara (HomeFirst) has been selected to operate the BHC. As the operator, they will be responsible for all maintenance, operations and services associated with BHC and sub-vendors such as security. This includes all supplies, equipment, staffing, and insurance to fully operate each proposed site. The City's Housing Department will be monitoring the performance of HomeFirst and all BHC operations closely, throughout the duration of the BHC initiative. As with all other City funded projects and services administered through the Housing Department, the agreement between the City and HomeFirst will establish project deliverables, performance goals, and overall outcomes for BHC and HomeFirst. Additionally, as will most service oriented agreements, the Housing Department will be required to report back to City Council annually on the performance of HomeFirst and the overall success of BHC.

***Q. Has the City of San José determined who will reside in the BHC?***

A. Unhoused working or adults with a work history will reside in the two pilot BHC's. Residents will be assessed through Santa Clara Counties Coordinated Care system and will be required to have or develop a housing plan to exit to permanent housing. Prospective residents will be referred to the HomeFirst where they will be screened for BHC eligibility. For more detail on the operation, services and resident eligibility can be found in the December 8, 2018 memorandum at the BHC Webpage link above.

# Bridge Housing Communities

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### Updated 12/13/2018

**Q: Will there be services and security on-site at the BHC?**

A: Yes. For the first year of the BHC pilot, the site operator will be required to provide 24-hour on-site contracted security seven days a week. In addition, program services staff will be on-site to provide site management and resident services. After one year of operation, the City will reevaluate the need for 24-hour security.

**Q: will residents of the BHC be required to pay Rent?**

A: Yes - **Rent** – Consistent with the Rapid Rehousing Programs that will be working in conjunction with the pilot BHC's, residents will be required to pay monthly rent.

**Q: What happens to the residents who break rules and are asked to leave? Won't this add more homeless on our streets?**

A: BHC residents *will* be required to follow community rules just as an apartment tenant or hotel guest would be required to follow applicable rules. Just like apartment tenants or hotel guests, there will be consequences for not following rules at the BHC, which may include removal. As with any other regulatory requirement, whether it's a law, rule, or code of conduct, the penalty will be based on the severity of the infraction. In other words, not all violations will constitute removal. Along with rules and codes of conduct, there will be an established protocol for dealing with violations at the BHC.

While Bridge Housing is a fairly new and unique model of development, the population being served and the services are very similar to rapid rehousing program (RRP) models that have been successful around the country for several years. Historically, these types of programs experience 70% to 90% success transitioning individuals from homelessness to permanent housing. In addition to the traditional support provided through RRP, San José is proposing a higher level of services, support, and resident coordination at the BHC's aimed at transitioning to permanent housing. While it is possible that a small number of BHC residents might not successfully transition to permanent housing, the overall impact of BHC will be a reduction of homeless on the streets.

**Q: How would the local homeless be stopped from using the facilities? Will it be fully gated?**

A: There are several factors built into the development and operations to deter uninvited guests:

- The BHC is interim housing not a shelter, as such, prospective residents will need to be referred and apply for residency.
- As interim housing, there will be no drop-in services provided for non-residents.
- The facility will be fenced and gated for the privacy of the residents.
- Security - for the first year of operation the facility will have 24/7 security. After the first year, the security needs will be reassessed and adjusted accordingly.
- Onsite staffing - in addition to security, the BHC operator HomeFirst, will have onsite staff 24/7 who will monitor the site and immediate area. After the first year, the onsite staffing needs will be reassessed and adjusted accordingly.

# Bridge Housing Communities

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### Updated 12/13/2018

- Resident managers – Over the first year of operation, BHC resident will be trained to assist in the management and oversight of the BHC.

#### ***Q: Will drug testing be required?***

A: No, drug testing will not be required at the pilot BHC's. The BHC program does not require absolute sobriety for participation **but there are strict rules of behavior in the BHC community**. If behavior violates the community guidelines, this could result in exiting the community. Residents are not allowed to have illegal drugs, manufacture drugs, or have drug paraphernalia on BHC property. Alcohol and marijuana are not allowed in common/community/shared spaces.

Most communities across the country have adopted the “Housing First” model, including San José and the County of Santa Clara. Housing First is an approach to quickly and successfully connect individuals and families experiencing homelessness to permanent housing without preconditions and barriers to entry, such as sobriety, treatment, or service participation requirements. Supportive services are offered to maximize housing stability and prevent returns to homelessness as opposed to addressing predetermined treatment goals prior to permanent housing entry.

#### ***Q: Will these BHC's bring more crime to the surrounding neighborhoods?***

A: It is not anticipated that the proposed BHC will attract more crime to the area. Contrary to this belief, other cities with similar communities have reported reductions in crime after the opening of these facilities. These facilities generally provide added security, homeless outreach, and other resources often lacking in the surrounding neighborhoods to address homelessness.

## **BHC Development**

#### ***Q: How were the proposed sites selected and what was the criteria?***

A: AB 2176 requires the City's BHC to be located on City owned or leased properties. In addition to the list of 99 City owned sites originally evaluated partner agencies including Caltrans, Santa Clara Valley Water District, and the Valley Transportation Authority volunteered the use of 23 additional sites for short term use to host BHC's. The methodology used to rank the list of 122 potential sites was based on that collective feedback and was reviewed and approved by the City Council on December 12, 2017. The site scoring criteria was developed after receiving significant input from the community, City Council, and development partners. Site evaluation began by assessing basic site needs such as minimal size requirements, access to utilities and site ownership. Sites that met the minimal site requirements were then ranked based on an objective scoring process that factored in community concerns - like setbacks to schools and residential - and other pertinent site factors (i.e. environmental constraints) to determine the top three candidate sites. The setbacks from pre-K-12<sup>th</sup> grade schools and residential surpass other initiatives (i.e. Marijuana Collectives) that raised similar community concerns.

#### ***Q: Is environmental review required to construct the BHC's?***

# Bridge Housing Communities

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### Updated 12/13/2018

A: Yes. The City is not exempt from conducting an environmental review of each candidate BHC site. All proposed BHC sites are mandated to go through a full environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

**Q: Why construct only 40 sleeping cabins in the BHC – as it's only going to address a fraction of the homelessness crisis?**

A: In addition to the BHC project, the City is supporting many initiatives intended to address interim solutions until permanent housing can be built. Recent interim solutions include the opening of overnight warming locations (OWL), the adoption of an incidental and temporary shelter ordinance, and the conversion of two hotels. The BHC pilot project is one additional option. The BHC pilot will provide the City with critical information about the success's and challenges of developing and operating BHCs.

**Q. Is bridge housing really the answer to ending homelessness here in San José?**

A: No. Bridge Housing brings residents one step closer to ending homelessness. Because of the enormity and complexity of homelessness in San José and across the region, a full range of housing opportunities is required. According to evidence-based best practice research, the creation of permanent housing is the most effective long-term solution to ending homelessness in San José and across the county. Bridge housing is just one of many housing opportunities being created as an “interim solution” to bridge homeless individuals from the street to permanent housing.

**Q: Does the development of affordable housing increase crime and/or lower property values in the area in which its developed?**

A: There is no valid evidence to suggest that affordable housing increases crime or negatively impacts property values in the area in which it is developed. To the contrary, several studies have been conducted on the impact of affordable housing on surrounding neighborhoods and concluded that in most case these newly constructed development contribute to the diversity and value of the surrounding community.

**Q: The D3 site looks like it is located within a flood zone. Per the FEMA flood Map, it is in the orange area of the map and has a 1% annual chance of flood.**

A: While some of the surrounding areas to the D3 site are listed as a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA), the D3 site is not within a SFHA. The D3 site is in an “Area of Minimal Flood Hazard.” There are no flood related building limitations.

Note: It is important to note that even areas that have been identified in the SFHA are not necessarily prohibited from new building. Depending on the flood designation, these areas often require flood mitigation efforts as a condition of building.

These finding were confirmed in the Initial Study required under CEQA that was posted for public review and comment on 11/9/18.

Bridge Housing Communities  
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)  
Updated 12/13/2018

**After the Pilot**

***Q: Will the pilot BHC become permanent – or will BHC sites disband once AB 2176 sunsets in January 2022?***

A: It is currently anticipated that any Bridge Housing Community will disband when AB 2176 sunsets in January 2022. However, if proven successful, AB 2176 may be extended through State Legislation. Additionally, the emergency sleeping cabins as well as the community buildings will be designed to allow mobility should the City identify alternative uses of the pilot locations.

**Q: If this is a successful pilot project, what sites would you choose? Seems that there are very few to choose from so how could this be a good solution if there are no viable sites?**

A: City Council will deliberate staff's recommendation at the December 18, 2018 City Council meeting. If city Council elects to move forward with staff's recommendation, Housing Department staff will report back to City Council on the successes and lessons learned while developing and implementing the pilot BHC. At that point, staff will seek direction from the City Council on future BHC development, including siting of future communities.

Other possibilities include:

- New City sites not originally included in the list of 99 sites - The original list of 99 sites was City surplus land in 2017 when the siting process began. The City periodically adds new sites to the surplus list when older city facilities are retired or when acquiring land through purchase or trade.
- Partner agencies – the City will continue to explore partnerships with other public agencies such as Caltrans, VTA, and Santa Clara Valley Water District which yielded the two site being considered for the pilot BHC.
- Lease of private land – Although costly, the City may consider leasing private property such as future housing development sites if feasible. This may be even more viable once the first pilot has been established and lessons learned result in BHC development and operation costs reductions.