



CITY OF
TRAVERSE CITY

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Update on Year-Round Overnight Shelter for
the Unhoused

February 12, 2024
Study Session
Report to City Commission



DISCUSSION



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A CITY LED STRATEGY

Addressing Homelessness

Compassionate Approach

A compassionate and empathetic approach to keep local citizens who are experiencing homelessness safe, year-round, while working on identifying permanent housing

Recognition of Urgency

Acknowledging the pressing need to address the crisis at The Pines, and constraints of doing so when no alternative shelter exists

Providing Shelter

A goal for homelessness to be rare, brief and one-time; enough temporary emergency shelter is a critical component of reaching a functional end to homelessness

Prioritizing Collaboration

Emphasis is placed on collaborating with community organizations to leverage resources and expertise in addressing homelessness



97%

***According to the Northwest
Michigan Coalition to End
Homelessness, 97% of the people in
the Pines identify Traverse City as
their home.***

PURPOSE OF MOU

Decreasing Unsheltered Homelessness

The purpose is the City's shared recognition with partners of the pressing need to address unsheltered homelessness within the region. Through collaborative efforts, a consensus has emerged that establishing a year-round overnight shelter is one vital and strategic component in tackling this complex issue.

Three Pronged Approach

- Develop a proposed plan to keep Safe Harbor open for year-round overnight shelter, effective in 2024.
- Develop cost estimates, funding strategies, and an operating plan for year-round overnight shelter operations.
- Develop proposed roles and responsibilities and necessary agreements to memorialize the same, for consideration of their respective governing bodies.



CHRONIC HOMELSSNESS

Chronic Homelessness is defined as a homeless individual with a disability who lives either in a place not meant for human habitation for twelve months or on at least four (4) separate occasions in the last three years.

WHY DID THE CITY APPROACH SAFE HARBOR?

Viabile Option due to Urgency

Recognizing the immediate urgency of the situation, it has been determined in collaboration with partners and service providers that Safe Harbor remains the only viable option for the 2024 season. We are grateful that Safe Harbor has been receptive to ongoing discussions regarding this matter.

Pragmatic Location

- Existing building
- Most cost effective
- No need to purchase land
- Existing operation
- No other partners possess the staff, experience, and expertise necessary to address this need
- When identified by the City, none but Safe Harbor took on the task
- Most viable option for immediacy



SAFE HARBOR

Background & Current Operations

Safe Harbor's current location, established in 2017, has a rich history predating the facility opening. Generously guided by the faith community, it has been a longstanding fixture in the area for decades.

Special Land Use Permit

- SLUP supported and issued by the City in 2015
- Allows for Emergency Shelter October 15 - May 15

Current Operations

- Operational Date: October 15 - April 30
- Operational Hours: 6 pm to 8 am

SLUP Amendment #1: August 2019

- Changed the condition of operational seasonal length
- Length of seasonal operation shall be approved by City Commission



COMMUNITY CONCERNS

Year Round Operations at Safe Harbor

Is year-round operation a permanent solution?

No. While essential for providing immediate relief and support to individuals experiencing homelessness, it does not necessarily need to be viewed as a permanent fixture or sustained in perpetuity.

Can the operating hours be adjusted?

The conflict arises as Safe Harbor closes at 8 am, coinciding with the morning commute for both adults and school children.

How can the impact on the Traverse Area District Library be addressed?

TADL Director noted under public comment they would need approximately \$40K - 45K in additional funding for security purposes.

How can cleanliness of private & public property be addressed and ensured?

Cleanliness around the homeless shelter has impacts on both private and public property. Collaborative efforts between local authorities, community organizations, and shelter management are essential.

What support can Law Enforcement provide?

Law enforcement, the QRT, and assigned Patrol Officers can play a pivotal role in supporting a year-round homeless shelter by collaborating with community stakeholders to reduce the footprint at The Pines.

How can the impact on local businesses be addressed?

Build on current dialog with TCPD to provide tools for engaging with shelter residents.

How will we continue to ensure daytime shelter operations?

The current daytime shelter operates under grant funding.



CONTINUUM OF CARE

Comprehensive Support

Providing comprehensive support tailored to their specific needs

Prevention and Intervention

An approach that involves not only responding to homelessness but also preventing it whenever possible

Seamless Transitions

Providing resources for smooth transitions between different stages of assistance. For example, individuals may enter Safe Harbor's emergency shelter initially but then transition to securing permanent housing

Collaboration and Coordination

Developing strategies that require collaboration and coordination among various service providers, government agencies, nonprofits, and community stakeholders

LONG TERM GOALS & INITIATIVES

A Strategic Response and Incremental Endeavors

Community Outreach Court

Exploring the opportunity to re-initiate in 2024: Wrap around services approach for the individual. Collaboration between GT County, Prosecutor, Courts, City Attorney, and service providers

Aligning with Coalition Campaign

To end chronic homelessness by 2028; part of a 5 year strategic plan. Include in the forthcoming City's Strategic Plan

Develop Emergency Solution

A resolution to extend Emergency Temporary Shelter operations through October 14th



Draft a High Level Agreement

Develop an agreement with Safe Harbor and the City for funding to allow operation

Behavioral Health and Wellness Crisis Center

Slated to open in December 2024, in collaboration with Community Mental Health and GT County, the Center will provide targeted assistance to the homeless, aiming to alleviate burdens on Safe Harbor, TCPD, and EMS while offering vital support to those in need

Support Permanent Supportive Housing

Annika II, East Bay Flats, Riverview Terrace

POTENTIAL OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

For Safe Harbor to be Available Summer 2024

1. Adopt New SLUP and Develop Agreement for Funding

- Initiate process for new Special Land Use Permit
- City Commission approves new SLUP for permanent year-round shelter

2. Extend Emergency Operations and Develop Agreement for Funding

- Change the condition of operational seasonal length
- City Commission votes to allow summer 2024 operations ONLY
- City Commission approves funding source and scope of services for summer 2024 ONLY

3. No Year-Round Shelter Available for Summer 2024

- City Commission administration and staff to prepare for the unhoused population for the summer 2024



HOMELESSNESS CRISIS

*We do not have enough year-round,
emergency shelter, or permanent
supportive housing units.*

OUR TRACTION

Supporting Permanent Housing and Shelter



2015

The year the City of Traverse City supported and issued a Special Land Use Permit for Safe Harbor



498

Inclusive Housing Units approved through PILOT arrangements since 2019



35

Permanent Supportive Housing Units approved through PILOT arrangements since 2022 at Annika Place II and East Bay Flats. Currently under development.



12

Permanent Supportive Housing Units at Riverview Terrace. Currently under development

OUR TRACTION

Embedded Police Social Worker and Quick Response Team

- The Quick Response Team (QRT) and Police Social Worker (PSW) Coordinator have emerged as a vital component of the Traverse City Police Department's community policing strategy
- Launched in late 2022 with support, including a \$150,000 grant from the Michigan State Police's Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Abuse Program (COSSAP) and \$60,000 from Rotary Charities grant
- The PSW Coordinator collaborates with the crisis intervention teams on overdose prevention programs and establishes connections with vulnerable people in the community
- Since its inception, the QRT has fostered extensive collaboration to engage with individuals most susceptible to crises related to substance use, mental health, and homelessness



2023 QRT STATS

118

Active Participants

88%

Experiencing crises related to
homelessness



OUR TRACTION

Increasing Law Enforcement

Provided Additional Patrol Officer

One Patrol Officer was assigned to the unhoused matter in the NOBO/Boardman neighborhood, and is currently shared with the Pines/Central neighborhood due to the need in the summer.

Future Positions

- TCPD would like to assign one Patrol Officer to each location, NOBO/Boardman neighborhood and Pines/Central neighborhood
- TCPD currently has 3 open positions
- Exploration of adding a 4th Patrol Officer to augment the QRT and service in both areas

Active Recruitment Strategies

The City's Human Resources Department and TCPD are in the process of developing recruitment strategies to coincide with this initiative and implement as soon as possible.

SUPPORT & PARTNERS

A City Led Strategy to Address Homelessness

The City is collaborating with local partners to determine cost estimates, encompassing staffing and capital improvement expenses.

We are grateful for the the expertise in this field and want to recognize that the MOU does not preclude other stakeholders, and we are actively seeking and welcoming additional service providers and resources.

Support

Local grant makers and area funders have been engaged, and potentially supportive of this collaborative solution

Partners

The City is working closely with area partners such as Safe Harbor and the Northwest Michigan Coalition to End Homelessness



CITY COMMISSION QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

A City Led Strategy to Address Homelessness

Chronic homelessness is one of the most complex issues facing our communities today. Chronic homelessness is life threatening and complex, but it's solvable with the right approach.

**Providing Direction to City Administration &
Staff on Next Steps**

Public Comment



2028

***Chronic homelessness can be
solved, and the Northwest
Michigan Coalition has
committed to ending chronic
homelessness by 2028***