



## Legislation Text

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**To:** County of Sonoma Board of Supervisors and Board of Commissioners of the Community Development Commission

**Department or Agency Name(s):** County Administrator, Department of Health Services, Sonoma County Community Development Commission, and General Services Department

**Staff Name and Phone Number:** Sheryl Bratton, 565-2588; Barbie Robinson, 565-7876; Caroline Judy, 565-8058

**Vote Requirement:** Majority

**Supervisorial District(s):** Countywide

**Title:**

**9:30 A.M.** - Indoor-Outdoor Shelter Sites and Services for Homeless Individuals

**Recommended Action:**

- A) Narrow down the list of potential indoor-outdoor shelter sites to 2 or 3 for staff to further evaluate, including conducting community engagement, and return to the Board on April 7, 2020 for the Board to select a site or sites.
- B) Provide direction to staff to assess State sites made available by Executive Order of the Governor of the State of California as potential site to locate indoor-outdoor shelter sites.
- C) Accept staff's report on the assessment of operations at the emergency shelter Los Guilicos Villages.
- D) Accept staff's report on the status of shared housing purchases and placements along with status of contracts for mental health and substance use services.
- E) Approve staff's recommended County Interim Homeless Encampment Policy to facilitate outreach and care coordination to homeless individuals residing in encampments on County property in order to support their housing, health, and social safety net needs.
- F) Approve staff's recommendation to expand the ACCESS Sonoma County Initiative to add a permanent Intensive Care Team to respond to homeless encampments.
- G) Adopt a resolution amending the Allocation List for the departments of Health Services and Human Services, and the Community Development Commission adding 10.00 full-time limited term equivalent positions effective March 10, 2020.
- H) Approve the County's participation in the Governor's 100-Day Challenge to take bold action in Sonoma County to address homelessness.

**Executive Summary:**

This Board item provides a status update on key actions the Board has directed staff to take, including the following: (1) address homelessness and strengthen the sheltering, housing, service system of care; (2) report on the operations of the LG Villages emergency shelter site; (3) key information regarding sites that staff have identified as potential locations for the two indoor-outdoor shelter sites for the Board's consideration; (4) County Interim Encampment Policy to be adopted until the Home Sonoma Leadership Council adopts a comprehensive, county-wide policy; (5) overview of a homeless encampment response team of the ACCESS Initiative to respond to encampments; and (6) description of staff's proposal for participation in the

Governor's 100-Day Homeless challenge.

**Discussion:**

California has a homelessness crisis. California now has an estimated 151,000 people experiencing homelessness, accounting for almost half (47 percent) of the homeless population in the United States. In the 2018 Point in Time Homeless Count, Sonoma County was among the top three suburban counties in America. Sonoma County is 77% higher in per capita homelessness by Continuum of Care (CoC) category than the next highest suburban county in America. The 2019 Homeless Count found an eleven percent increase over the 2018 count. Like other jurisdictions throughout California, high housing costs, low vacancy rates, and displacements due to the recent wildfire disasters are contributory factors to the high rates of homelessness in Sonoma County.

Homelessness is a complex, dynamic, and all-consuming crisis for those experiencing it. Local jurisdictions like Sonoma County have provided most of the homeless assistance in our jurisdictions, relying in part on County General Fund and Federal and State funding.

For the last two years, the State has made its largest one-time investments in combatting homelessness in state history - the Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) and the Homeless, Housing Assistance Program (HHAP) have in combination allocated \$1.15 billion in flexible funds to local governments. Despite these investments, Sonoma County and other local jurisdictions are still faced with gaps in the services, sheltering, and housing resources that are desperately needed to address the County's homeless crisis.

Currently in Sonoma County there are approximately 3,000 individuals experiencing homelessness. Since 2011, the number of individuals experiencing homelessness in Sonoma County has been reduced by 1,500. Sonoma County, our cities, and non-profit partners have made some progress, including over the last three years successfully housing more than 3,000 individuals.

**ACTIONS TAKEN**

The Board of Supervisors have thus far taken the following actions to address the need:

Emergency Declaration to Address Homeless Encampment on Joe Rodota Trail. On December 2019, the Board took bold action resulting in significant investments to strengthen the County's homeless services infrastructure. On December 17, 2019, the Board approved a resolution declaring a homeless emergency on the Joe Rodota Trail (JRT) due to the largest homeless encampment of 258 occupants in Sonoma County history which posed a threat to public health and safety to those experiencing homelessness residing on the trail, and those living near the trail as well as environmental threats to the JRT itself. The Board activated the County's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to execute a cross-departmental, cross jurisdictional plan to clear and close the trail. The Board also directed staff to provide resources to mitigate the hazards on the trail and risks to occupants while a plan was executed to rehouse campers and clear the trail. This included measures to address rat and pest control, placement of additional hand washing stations and bathroom facilities, trash removal services and security services, and increasing the number of needle disposal bins.

Short and Mid-Term Solutions to Address Homelessness. On December 23, 2019, the Board approved a \$12 million plan to strengthen the homeless services system of care by: (1) purchasing multi-unit homes for permanent supportive housing (PSH), (2) identifying site locations for two indoor-outdoor shelter sites including navigation centers; (3) creating a new Care Coordination Team of the County's ACCESS Sonoma County Initiative to provide outreach and care management services to JRT occupants; (4) contracting for services to expand access to mental health and substance use treatment and medical services to support JRT

homeless occupants to transition into the housing/sheltering systems.

Clearing and Closing the JRT Trail. The Board also directed the EOC to close the JRT by January 31, 2020, and establish an emergency shelter Los Guilicos Villages (LG) consisting of approximately 60 tiny hut units for JRT occupants. The Community Development Commission (CDC) entered into an agreement with St. Vincent De Paul (SVDP) to operate the emergency shelter. Through the work of the ACCESS Care Coordination Team, 258 individuals received consultation for services with 134 of them enrolling in the ACCESS Initiative and approximately 104 individuals receiving placement in the LG Villages and other housing and residential treatment settings. Approximately 60 individuals refused housing or sheltering and other services.

Status of Shared Housing and Services Contracts. On December 23, 2019, the Board directed the Community Development Commission to identify and purchase up to 6 multi-unit homes with a budget of approximately \$5 million. On January 14, 2020, the Board authorized CDC to approve and execute agreements for two properties: 866 Sonoma Avenue in Santa Rosa and 8190-8194 Arthur Street, Cotati. The ACCESS Sonoma County Intensive Care Coordination Team is assessing individuals at LG Villages and other homeless individuals through the Coordinated Entry system to determine appropriate placements in each of the shared homes and other housing placements in the community.

In January, under County Code 2-172, the Director of General Services executed a lease agreement with CDC to use two vacant houses on the Los Guilicos campus for one year at fair market value terms of \$4,000 per month. These homes also provide shared living housing options. In total the purchased and leased homes will provide between 24 and 26 units of housing. The family-home options create opportunities for individuals, groups and families, whom are assessed as ready for the responsibilities of a shared living environment with supportive services.

Los Guilicos (LG) Villages. As part of the County's efforts to clear and close the JRT, the Emergency Operations Center and the General Services Department established a 60-unit emergency shelter, located near Highway 12 and Pythian Road in Santa Rosa, in 11 days to provide sheltering and other services and supports for homeless individuals on the JRT. On January 26, 2020, the first group of homeless individuals occupying the JRT were transitioned to the LG Villages. The LG Villages offers a navigation center and care coordination provided by the ACCESS Intensive Care Coordination team. Services offered to LG residents include: Medi-Cal, General Assistance, Employment and Workforce training and assistance, mental health services, substance use disorder services, permanent supportive housing and affordable housing navigation services, finance and legal services, transportation services and supports as well as ancillary services to help individuals obtain their driver's licenses or identification cards, fill-out applications for services and assistances. The LG Villages has accommodated individuals, couples, and their pets. The LG Villages cost the County \$2,938,927 to construct, including \$390,000 for SVDP to operate for 3 months. As of the date of submission of this Board Item there are approximately 59 individuals residing at the LG Villages. Over the course of the past two months there have been approximately 78 individuals who have resided at the LG Villages. The March 10, 2020 Board agenda includes a separate item updating the cost estimates of standing the LG Villages. Please see that Board Item for additional details regarding the operations and overall expenditure report for the LG Villages.

#### ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Addressing the challenge dictates additional measures, investments, and actions. As a result staff is presenting for the Board's review the following:

Recommended Action "A" (Indoor-Outdoor Shelter Site Options): Narrow down the list of potential indoor-outdoor shelter sites to 2 or 3 for staff to further evaluate, including conducting community engagement, and

return to the Board on April 7, 2020 for the Board to select a site or sites.

There are currently a number of shelters located in Sonoma County (see Attachment 1). These shelters provide a total of 935 beds and are available to residents throughout the County. They are funded with State, Federal, local, and General Fund dollars. The County has contracted for services with shelter providers throughout the County. The County does not own nor operates year-round shelter facilities. As of this writing the number of homeless individuals is 2,951. Thus, the current number of shelter beds available is inadequate to meet the demand for shelter services.

On December 23, 2019, the Board directed staff to identify locations and operators for 2 indoor-outdoor shelters with capacity to house 40 individuals in each shelter. The Board approved the specific criteria detailed in the table below to guide in the identification of potential sites.

Site Criteria	Site Criteria
Size	Walkable site
Accessible for those with mobility limitations	Site configuration
Entrance Access	Perimeter security
Parking on site	Potential environmental hazards
Proximity to public transportation	Proximity to services
Available utilities	Duration

On January 7, 2020, the CDC solicited a request for qualifications to identify potential operators for the shelters as well as to identify potential site locations for these shelters. The RFQ process yielded three qualified operators, but no site locations. In addition, the Board Chair sent a letter to all governmental jurisdictions and nongovernmental organizations asking that they consider sites within their control that could be considered for potential locations for the shelters and received no responses.

Staff conducted its own review process and identified the following 6 potential sites for the Board's consideration: 1) Aston Barns Fairgrounds; 2) Cloverdale Rail Depot; 3) PRMD Parking Lot (Permit Sonoma); 4) Chanate PH Lab Parking Lot; 5) 4040 Santa Rosa Avenue; and 6) Chanate Hall. Attachment 2 provides a summary analysis of each proposed site.

A preliminary funding plan (Attachment 4) is included to illustrate the financing mechanisms available to fund the development of new shelter(s), additional services, and a Homeless Encampment Assistance Resource Team.

**Recommended Action "B":** Provide direction to staff to assess State sites made available by Executive Order of the Governor of the State of California as potential site to locate indoor-outdoor shelter sites.

Staff is also reviewing State-owned property as identified by Governor Newsom on February 20, 2020 as sites that may be available for shelter locations. Staff will assess these sites utilizing the Board approved criteria and if any potential sites have been identified, present those options to the Board at a future date to be determined.

**Recommended Action "C":** Accept staff's report on the assessment of operations at the emergency shelter Los Guilicos Villages.

Attachment 5 to this report provides an update on Los Guilicos Villages including the work of the

Interdepartmental Multi-Disciplinary Team, successful resource connections for clients, and issues noted at Los Guilicos Villages.

Recommended Action "D": Accept staff's report on the status of shared housing purchases and placements along with status of contracts for mental health and substance use services.

Attachment 6 to this report provides a status of shared housing purchases and placements along with status of contracts for mental health and substance use services.

Recommended Action "E": Approve staff's recommended County Interim Homeless Encampment Policy to facilitate outreach and care coordination to homeless individuals residing in encampments on County property in order to support their housing, health, and social safety net needs.

In an effort to prevent large encampments that create public health, humanitarian, and public safety risks and environmental hazards, staff is recommending the Board adopt an interim homeless encampment policy until the Home Sonoma County Leadership Council can develop and adopt a county-wide policy for all jurisdictions. The policy would consider encampments to be 5 or more individuals.

The draft encampment policy in Attachment 3 lays out the strategy for how a cross-departmental coordination effort starting with a new Intensive Care Coordination Team of the ACCESS Initiative serving as a homeless encampment team (the Homeless Encampment Assistance and Resource Team (HEART)). This team would provide outreach to individuals living in an encampment to coordinate their entry into services. The key to success of this encampment policy is for service providers with expertise across all safety net services to engage with individuals living in encampments to assess their needs and bring them into the service delivery system. The County recognizes that there are some who are not ready to enter the system and while the policy does not recommend enforcement action for all encampments, it does provide for enforcement action where encampments are larger than 5 and pose a risk to health, safety, and the environment. The policy details the role of law enforcement in the clearance process. Action before the Board includes a recommendation to fund the HEART Team and other costs associated with adopting the interim encampment policy.

Recommended Action "F": Approve staff's recommendation to expand the ACCESS Sonoma County Initiative to add a permanent Intensive Care Team to respond to homeless encampments.

The new Intensive Care Coordination Team will provide outreach to individuals living in encampments and provide coordination for entry into services. Staff for the new team are being requested via Recommended Action "G."

Staff will work with the United Way of the Wine Country to assess the capacity of 2-1-1 Sonoma County to support in helping to identify and manage outreach efforts to encampments.

Recommended Action "G": Adopt a resolution amending the Allocation List for the departments of Health Services and Human Services, and the Community Development Commission adding 10.00 full-time limited term equivalent positions effective March 10, 2020.

The personnel resolution is provided as Attachment 7 to this report.

The following positions are being requested as part of this item. The requested limited term end date of these positions is June 30, 2022.

Position	Dept.	FTEs	Annual Cost (\$)	Funding Source(s)

Health Program Manager	DHS	1.00	206,100	R & R*
Behavioral Health Clinician	DHS	1.00	183,900	R & R*
AODS Counselor II	DHS	2.00	320,600	R & R*
Public Health Investigator	DHS	1.00	143,500	R & R*
Senior Eligibility Specialist	HSD	1.00	118,900	R & R*
Social Service Worker III	HSD	2.00	329,432	1991 Realignment**
Social Service Supervisor I	HSD	1.00	171,938	1991 Realignment**
Senior Client Support Specialist	CDC	1.00	121,500	R & R*
Totals		10.00	1,595,870	

\* Reinvestment & Revitalization (RDA Residual) FY 2018-19 Year-End Close of Books Unanticipated Balance

\*\* Surplus 1991 Realignment prior year growth revenue received in FY 19-20

Law enforcement support services are also anticipated to successfully deliver services. Staffing cost estimates are under development and will be included for the Board’s consideration as part of the June Budget hearings.

**Recommended Action “H”:** Approve the County’s participation in the Governor’s 100-Day Challenge to take bold action in Sonoma County to address homelessness.

The Continuum of Care Lead Agency Sonoma County Community Development Commission in partnership with the Sonoma County Department of Health Services, and other core Safety Net Departments, are conducting a 100-Day Challenge to permanently house no less than seventy-five of our jurisdiction’s most vulnerable and chronically homeless individuals. This effort, which begin March 1, 2020 and goes through June 15<sup>th</sup>, will utilize Homeless Housing Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) funding leveraged with local general funds authorized in late December 2019 to provide a streamlined path to housing.

By April 15<sup>th</sup>, our goal is for 40 individuals from the Los Guilicos Villages to be provided with permanent housing. Approximately 20 of these individuals will be placed with master-lease project funding and another 20 individuals will be housed via Coordinated Entry System placement or special project vouchers from Continuum of Care project, Coordinated Entry Super Preference Vouchers, or Mainstream Vouchers. The remaining 35 individuals will be prioritized for housing in May.

**Prior Board Actions:**

On December 23, 2019 the Board took several actions related to emergency housing, shelter, and support service options.

**FISCAL SUMMARY**

<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>FY 19-20 Adopted</b>	<b>FY 20-21 Projected</b>	<b>FY 21-22 Projected</b>
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested			
<b>Total Expenditures</b>			
<b>Funding Sources</b>			
General Fund/WA GF			

State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
<b>Total Sources</b>			

**Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:**

Please refer to the Funding Plan, Attachment 4.

<b>Staffing Impacts:</b>			
<b>Position Title (Payroll Classification)</b>	<b>Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)</b>	<b>Additions (Number)</b>	<b>Deletions (Number)</b>
Health Program Manager	7,128 - 8,663	1.00	0
Behavioral Health Clinician	6,291 - 7,646	1.00	0
AODS Counselor II	5,268 - 6,402	2.00	0
Public Health Investigator	4,623 - 5,621	1.00	0
Senior Eligibility Specialist	4,773 - 5,800	1.00	0
Social Service Worker III	5,053 - 6,142	2.00	0
Social Service Supervisor I	6,027 - 7,326	1.00	0
Senior Client Support Specialist	4,767 - 5,795	1.00	0

**Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):**

Requested staff will provide for the addition of an Intensive Care Coordination Team to respond to homeless encampments.

**Attachments:**

1) Shelter Solutions Map, 2) Housing Solutions Narrative, 3) HEART Encampment Prevention Policy, 4) Funding Plan, 5) Update on Los Guilicos Villages; 6) Status of Shared Housing and Services Contracts; 7) Personnel Resolution; and 8) Homeless Location Maps

**Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:**

None