



City of Culver City

Mike Balkman Council
Chambers
9770 Culver Blvd.
Culver City, CA 90232

Staff Report

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Item #: A-2.

CC:HA - ACTION ITEM: (1) Approval of a Housing and Human Services Department, to Include the Housing and Enforcement Services Divisions, Currently Under the Community Development Department, and a New Human Services and Crisis Intervention Division; and (2) Approval of a New In-House Mobile Crisis Intervention Team.

Meeting Date: September 19, 2022

Contact Person/Dept.: Tevis Barnes, Housing Division
Arames White-Shearin, City Manager's Office

Phone Number: (310) 253-5782
(310) 253-6022

Fiscal Impact: Yes ☒ No ☐ **General Fund:** Yes ☒ No ☐

Attachments: Yes ☒ No ☐

Commission Action Required: Yes ☐ No ☒ **Date:**

Public Notification: (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas - City Council (09/14/2022)

Department Approval: John M. Nachbar, City Manager (09/14/2022)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Council and the Housing Authority (Authority) Board discuss and, if desired, approve (1) the formation of a new Housing and Human Services Department, to include the existing Housing and Enforcement Services Divisions, currently under the Community Development Department (CDD), and a new Human Services and Crisis Intervention Division; and (2) the creation of the initial phase of a new in-house Mobile Crisis Intervention Team.

BACKGROUND

During these unprecedented times of housing insecurity, homelessness, mental health crises, and substance abuse challenges, local governments nationwide are placing housing, human services, and non-enforcement crisis intervention at the forefront of local agencies. They are developing

strategies to more effectively direct resources to address these issues.

In furtherance of ensuring the well-being and quality of life of all Culver City residents, both housed and unhoused, staff recommends the creation of a new City department that will focus on housing, homelessness, mental health, substance abuse, and crisis intervention, which would include the current divisions of Housing and Enforcement Services, currently under CDD, and introduce a new division focused on Human Services and Crisis Intervention. The new department will be named the Housing and Human Services Department (HHS). HHS will put at the forefront of the City's agenda a comprehensive response to the housing, homeless, mental health and substance abuse crises plaguing our region.

Needs Assessment

In 2021, on any given night an estimated 291 people were experiencing homelessness in Culver City. This was an increase of 35% from the previous Count, which was conducted two years earlier. (This is the most recent publicly available data, as through a Memorandum of the Understanding (MOU) with the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), Culver City is unable to release the 2022 Internal Homeless Count raw data until fall 2022.) Staff is permitted to inform the Council and Authority that there were significant increases in persons living in tents and makeshift shelters, and the overall number of unhoused persons enumerated in 2022 has increased. In addition, during July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022, Enforcement Services coordinated and conducted 208 encampment cleanups, and the Saint Joseph's Center (SJC) Outreach Team responded to over 200 homeless outreach requests. Culver City Police Department (CCPD) responded to 4,051 calls involving unhoused persons, and the Culver City Fire Department (CCFD) dispatched 1,155 Calls for Service (CFS) related to unhoused persons, with 736 of the 1,155 CFS being for Emergency Medical Service (EMS).

Housing vulnerability and instability is increasing, as witnessed by a drastic rise in housing costs. According to a 2020 BAE Urban Economic Long-Term Rent Control Study, the average rent in Culver City across all housing types and bedroom sizes was \$2,580 in 2020. Based on data gathered by the Housing Division, the current average rent across all housing types and bedroom sizes is \$3,145. By comparison, the affordable two-bedroom rent as defined by the State of California Department of Community Development (HCD) is \$1,230 for a low-income household and \$2,255 for a moderate-income household. This represents a difference of \$1,915 and \$890 respectively. Even more significant, if this difference is evaluated through the lens of annual cost, the difference is \$22,980 and \$10,680 respectively.

Evolution of Housing and Enforcement Services Divisions

Over the last five years the scope of services and programming provided by the Housing and Enforcement Services Divisions has grown to meet the service needs of the community. With this growth, the interconnection of the two divisions has also increased. Enforcement Services has expanded to addresses hoarding issues largely impacting our elderly and disabled community. Enforcement Services has also expanded to address homelessness in our community with the coordination and execution of homeless encampment cleanups.

The Housing Division has expanded its services as well. In March 2018, the Council and Authority approved the Housing Programs Matrix, which detailed 22 core programs provided to the community

to address affordable housing and homeless needs. By May 2022, the Housing Programs Matrix had increased to 44 programs. These expanded programs include expansion of homeless outreach to evenings and Saturdays, Rent Control and Tenant Protections, and the Homekey Interim and Permanent Supportive Housing Project.

Housing and Enforcement Services Interconnection

There already exists an intersection between Housing and Enforcement Services. Historically, these divisions have shared staff to support the implementation of the COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program (COVID-19 RAP) and the Mobile Home Replacement Program. On an almost daily basis, the Housing Division and Enforcement Services, as well as other departments, coordinate homeless outreach and clean-up of homeless encampments. ("Clean-up" is the physical cleaning of the area and does not refer to removal of the unhoused persons). Enforcement Services supports Housing in providing Housing Quality Standards (HQS) Inspections for the Section 8 Program and providing inspections to determine untenable conditions under Rent Control/Tenant Protection Ordinances, as well as inspections for income and rent restricted units to assure occupancy by eligible tenants. This interplay between Housing and Enforcement Services is based on an established respect and comradery, which the Divisions have built over years through supporting each other and understanding their respective roles and responsibilities. The merging of these two divisions will be seamless and will enhance the already existing relationship to better serve the community.

If the Council and Authority Board approve the transition of the Housing Division and Enforcement Services Divisions as part of the formation of the new HHS department, Enforcement Services will continue to be tasked with overseeing compliance with the Culver City Municipal Code (CCMC) and ensuring that both the residential and commercial built environment adheres to the CCMC. Enforcement Services will also continue to support the Current Planning and Building Safety Divisions by addressing related compliance issues (i.e., project conditions of approval and building code compliance).

Mobile Crisis Intervention Team

HHS will include the addition of a new Human Services and Crisis Intervention Division and Mobile Crisis Intervention Team. Nationwide, local communities are moving toward non-enforcement response to calls for service for homeless related activity and persons experiencing a mental health or substance abuse crisis. On September 27, 2021, the Ad Hoc Mobile Crisis Intervention Subcommittee, consisting of Council Members Fisch and McMorris (Subcommittee), recommended the City Council approve the development of a mobile crisis intervention program to meet the Culver City community's mental and behavioral health needs. The City retained Critical Responses in Supportive Integrated Services (CRISIS) Consulting to help the City design a type of non-enforcement crisis intervention program that would void or lessen the role of law enforcement with certain types of CFS. The non-enforcement crisis intervention programming would include a specially trained team comprised of social workers, mental health and substance abuse clinicians, and peer advocates to meet the community's mental and behavioral health needs. CRISIS Consulting reviewed Culver City emergency service call types that might be appropriate for a non-enforcement response. This research elicited 4,576 CFS from 2019 and 5,256 CFS in 2021. A subset of these calls was randomly selected and assessed for how appropriate they might be for a non-enforcement

crisis intervention team. Of the CFS assessed in 2021, 552 were determined to be more appropriate for response by a non-enforcement crisis intervention team. This represented 90.8% of all CFS for 2021 or estimated 4,772 responses.

DISCUSSION

Housing and Human Services Department

HHS will be comprised of three divisions, each with a common focus on ensuring Culver City residents, both housed and unhoused, have resources focused on their wellbeing and quality of life. The Department's Organizational Chart is shown in Attachment #1.

The three Divisions of HHS include:

1. Housing Services
2. Enforcement Services
3. Human Services and Crisis Intervention

Housing and Human Services Staffing

The total proposed staffing levels of HHS is 27 full-time employees (FTEs). 19 of those positions are existing positions, and 8 are proposed new positions, primarily in the Human Services and Crisis Intervention Division. HHS will have four new administrative positions: the HHS Director, two HHS Project Managers and a Human Services and Crisis Intervention Manager.

- *HHS Director* - This individual will oversee the daily operations of the Department, define, and execute long and short-term goals of the Department, organize the missions of the HHS divisions, and supervise the three division managers and two HHS Project Managers.
- *HHS Project Managers* - Of the two Project Managers, one will be internally facing and will oversee the Department's budget, contracts, staff reports, invoicing and provide support to each of the three HHS divisions. The second Project Manager will be outward facing and will interface with the public and focus on public outreach and education and respond to community questions and concerns surrounding homelessness and crisis intervention.
- *Human Services and Crisis Intervention Manager* - The primary role of this position will be to oversee homeless and crisis intervention programming including the Homekey Interim and Permanent Supportive Housing Project and the internal Mobile Crisis Intervention Team.

Housing and Human Services Department Mission

Each HHS Division is interconnected with the mission of community wellbeing and quality of life:

- **Housing Services**- The mission of the Housing Services Division is to produce and provide access to decent, safe, sanitary, and affordable housing. Division programming includes, affordable housing production, monitoring of rent and income restricted units, administration of the Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8), landlord incentives, housing navigation, providing guidance and counseling on local and state housing rules and protections, support

displaced tenant households, provide a safe space for Landlord-Tenant Mediation, and operation of the Rent Stabilization Program. The primary mission of the Rent Stabilization Program is the enforcement of the Rent Control and Tenant Protections Ordinances (Ordinances) to assist residents in maintaining housing stability and protection from housing discrimination and untenable conditions. Key components of this Program include public education and outreach to broaden understanding of both tenant and landlords about the importance of the Ordinances and rent registration. The Housing Services Division is comprised of 10 existing FTEs: 6.5 FTEs for housing programs and 3.5 FTEs for the Rent Stabilization Program. The organizational structure of the Housing Services Division is depicted in Attachment #2.

- **Enforcement Services-** The mission of the Enforcement Services Division is to oversee compliance with the Municipal Code and to preserve and enhance the public health and safety and quality of life of the community. Enforcement Service's scope includes encampment clean-up, hoarding abatement, graffiti removal, illegal garage conversion, abandoned/inoperable vehicles, overgrown vegetation, and property maintenance. The Division also utilizes Park Patrol Officers to engage in public relationship building activities as well as to educate the public and present a safe and comfortable recreational environment for the community. Enforcement Services consists of 7 existing FTEs. The organizational structure of the Enforcement Services Division is detailed in Attachment #2.
- **Human Services and Crisis Intervention-** The mission of the new Human Services and Crisis Intervention Division is to engage the community while addressing homelessness, mental health, and substance abuse, including providing interim and permanent supportive housing through the Homekey Project, homeless outreach and referral to housing resources, and supportive services and non-enforcement crisis intervention for residents experiencing homelessness and mental health challenges.

Human Services and Crisis Intervention Division staff will consist of 7 FTEs. Of these, 5 FTEs are new positions, and 2 FTEs are existing positions (currently in the Housing Division) that implement homeless programming. The Human Services and Crisis Intervention Division will be led by the Human Services and Crisis Intervention Manager. Candidates for this position should hold a clinician degree at a Ph.D., Psy.D or master's level and have extensive experience working with persons impacted by mental health issues and persons experiencing homelessness. The following positions would report to the Human Services and Crisis Intervention Manager: (1) a Mental Health Clinician at a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) level; (1) One Mental Health Specialist; (3) a Homeless Analyst who will oversee the implementation of the Homekey Project and other homeless services, grants and contracts (this is an existing position); (4) a Housing Assistant who will oversee homeless outreach coordination and encampment cleanup (this is an existing position); and (5) Two Case Managers focused on mental health and substance use at a LCSW or Master of Social Work (MSW) level. More detailed job descriptions of the Human Service and Crisis Intervention Division are included in Attachment #2.

Initial Phase of Mobile Crisis Intervention Team

Purpose

A non-enforcement crisis intervention approach to public safety will enhance the City's ability to serve and protect the community. With the creation of the Mobile Crisis Intervention Team, the City will be able to directly engage people experiencing a mental health episode or substance abuse/dependency issues, while using a referral system that utilizes community partners in conjunction with City staff to provide additional follow up services both inpatient and outpatient. The use of a phased approach is consistent with programs throughout the country and is designed to allow us to adapt to our unique local conditions, develop best practices, evaluate, and make changes as necessary to the program as the MCIT scales over time.

Implementation, Transition and Training

The initial phase of the Mobile Crisis Intervention Team will take approximately 18 months separated into three different steps- hiring and program development, training, and initial deployment:

- **Hiring/Development (6 months)** - If the Council and Authority Board approve the creation of MCIT, the next step will be to confirm and solidify staffing levels and job specifications. These positions then must be reviewed with the Civil Service Commission. Job announcement, recruitment and hiring is anticipated to take approximately six months. During this period, staff will develop standard operating procedures and training programs, and will procure equipment and supplies. Given current supply chain disruptions, staff anticipates that there will be a significant lead-time required for the MCIT vehicle. Staff will also develop a communications program to be implemented at the time of initial deployment.
- **Training (6 months)** - To meet the needs of the community, the MCIT staff must be highly trained and specialized. Though some members of the Mobile Crisis Intervention Team will possess up to master's degrees, certification, and licensure in their area of expertise, there be a six-month implementation or "ramp up" period prior to full activation. This implementation period will include intensive and thorough training in the areas of suicide and crisis prevention, first aid, CPR, radio dispatch and operations, field training, and more.
- **Initial Deployment and Evaluation (6 months)** - After the end of the training period, initial deployment will begin and take place for the next six months. During this period processes, procedures, and outcomes will be implemented on a regular schedule, and tracked evaluated through a set of metrics. Staff will engage with the public, both to publicize the availability of the program and to receive feedback. Based on the evaluation and feedback, next steps for the growth or modification of the program will be developed and presented to the City Council.

Types of Calls

During the initial phase, the MCIT will respond to a subset of calls for service related to homelessness and mental health crises. The types of calls to which the MCIT will respond during the

initial phase will be determined by staff during the development of the program's standard operating procedures, which will occur during the first six months following the Council's approval of the program. Over time, the MCIT will build capacity, learn from the types of calls received, and determine whether to expand the program to respond to more types of calls, and if so which types of calls. The MCIT will not respond to calls for service where weapons or violence are present. This is in order to prevent the loss of life or grave injury to staff or other members of the public.

The Mobile Crisis Intervention Team will provide non-emergency medical transport such as to routine medical appointments and any follow-up medical care after an intervention episode.

Crisis Hotline

The public will reach the Mobile Crisis Intervention Team using a designated phone number that is not 911 (the "hotline"). The hotline will be staffed by a Case Manager, serving as dispatcher, who will be trained to recognize which calls fall within the scope of the MCIT. Additional dispatch options may be considered during future phases.

Days and Hours of Operation

During the initial phase, as the City's unique needs and best practices are determined, the MCIT will launch with a limited number of hours. It's anticipated that during subsequent phases, additional hours will be added, with the goal of eventually reaching 24/7 coverage.

To determine the optimal days and hours of operation for the initial phase, Culver City emergency call for service data was examined from the period of July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022 to determine calls for service involving the unhoused and mental health crisis. Based on this data, to provide the best coverage, during the initial phase the times of operation are expected to be 12pm to 8pm, Tuesday through Saturday. The assignment of the 40 hours of operation during the initial phase will be reexamined on an ongoing basis to ensure they are meeting the needs of the community.

Mobile Crisis Intervention Team Staffing

For the initial phase, the following positions will make up the Mobile Crisis Intervention Team, reporting to the Human Services and Crisis Intervention Manager:

- Mental Health Clinician (1 FTE)
- Mental Health Specialist (1 FTE)
- Case Manager Mental Health/Substance Use/Crisis Dispatch (2 FTEs)

One Case Manager will be responsible for answering the hotline and dispatch during the operating hours. They may also provide mental health, substance abuse, and suicide response over the phone. The Mental Health Clinician, Mental Health Specialist, and the second Case Manager will be dispatched to the field to respond to calls for service. In the event of a temporary absence by one field team member, the other two will be able to respond in person as long as there is a minimum of two team members.

Staff believes the formation of the new Housing and Human Services Department, to include the

existing Housing and Enforcement Services Divisions and a new Human Services and Crisis Intervention Division, as well as the creation of an in-house Mobile Crisis Intervention Team, will more effectively direct resources to address the current housing insecurity, homelessness, mental health crises, and substance abuse challenges faced by the Culver City community.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

The preliminary estimate for the fiscal impact of the new positions and associated on-going and one-time costs for the creation of the HHS Department is \$1.75 million annually. Of this total, approximately \$180,000 is for one-time expenditures for office furniture, desktop and laptop computers, cellphones, office supplies and equipment, and a specialized van for transportation purposes. Approximately \$1.4 million is for annual salaries and benefits.

Funding budgeted in the Adopted Budgets for Fiscal Years 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 for the creation of the mobile crisis intervention team will be realigned to support the creation of the HHS Department. A total of \$2.95 million is available in Account #10116100.619800 (Non-Departmental - Other Contractual Services).

Once the Department is approved by City Council and the Authority Board, staff will return to the Council and Authority Board to discuss and recommend a more detailed budget and related budget amendments.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Proposed HHS Programming Chart
2. Proposed HHS Organizational Chart

MOTIONS

That the City Council and Housing Authority Board discuss and, if desired, approve:

1. The formation of the new Housing and Human Services (HHS) Department, to include the existing Housing and Enforcement Services Divisions, formerly under the Community Development Department (CDD), and a new Human Services and Crisis Intervention Division; and
2. The creation of the initial phase of an in-house Mobile Crisis Intervention Team; and
3. Provide other direction to the City Manager/Executive Director as deemed appropriate.