

From: [Evie Craig](#)
To: [Public Testimony](#)
Subject: Finance, Governance and Public Safety Committee: Please reconsider Ordinance \$240046
Date: Tuesday, January 30, 2024 8:01:32 AM

To: The Hon. Andrea Bough, the Hon. Quinton Lucas, the Hon. Darrell Curls, the Hon. Crispin Rea and the Hon. Wes Rogers

Reconsider Ordinance #240046

1) The City should withdraw and reissue the RFP for a low-barrier shelter issued in August 2023 and the contract with one provider for a single large shelter currently being proposed. The substantial revision of the RFP to increase the number and scope of locations and not fund one 80-bed shelter in the Paseo Gateway as the sole contractor. Paseo West and adjacent neighborhoods understand that Hope Faith may be one of the selected sites and support the need for low barrier shelter, but the number of beds must be reduced from the proposed 80 to no more than 20. The area around this location already has a crisis overload of agencies and programs serving those experiencing street homelessness in a 4-6 block radius.

One Low Barrier Shelter in a 300+ square mile city is insufficient; Kansas City needs multiple smaller scale low barrier shelters to address multiple vulnerable populations, not one large shelter for single adults only and to reach areas of long-established street and shelter homelessness, not only in an area already supporting multiple large shelters and services for persons experiencing street homelessness. The RFP must include an authentic community engagement process, sustained investment in the surrounding blocks of the shelter, by the City and by providers through the development and implementation of a Community Benefits Agreement that includes security for neighborhoods, parks, and other community assets.

2)The reissued RFP must include robust and clearly defined community engagement at all stages and should include the following components funded as part of the City's plan to provide low barrier shelter services:

- **MULTIPLE LOCATIONS TO HEALTHY SCALE in areas of long-established street and shelter homelessness (South KC, Midtown, pockets in the Northland). Sites co-located with multiple service providers best meet the requirements of the RFP. In fact, there is a provision for multiple awards in the RFP as stated, "This RFP may result in multiple awards."**
- **Shelter options available for all vulnerable populations, including chronically homeless households, persons fleeing domestic**

violence/sexual assault/stalking/human trafficking, young adults & youth aging out of foster care, veterans, and persons with physical and mental health disabilities.

- Sustained investment in the surrounding blocks of the shelter, by the City and by the provider through the development and implementation of an Incentivized Improvement Districts for this neighborhoods that are hosting shelters that invest in the security of neighborhoods, parks, and other community assets, including but not limited to trash amnesty, permitting fast tracks for development, tax incentive improvement district, wrap around services, assertive street outreach, more police and park rangers, and small business incubators. These Districts would not only provide a safe environment for shelter and neighborhood residents but would invest in the a better quality of life for those in shelters and/or participating in services as well as those living, working and visiting the neighborhoods. The City could help create permanent amenities that would enhance local neighborhoods while providing solutions to resolve street and shelter homelessness.
- Robust community engagement in the development of the RFP, the issuance of the RFP, and the monitoring of the shelter's operations.

3) Why Paseo West/Paseo Gateway should not be the location of one large low barrier shelter:

- There is a current crisis overload of programs/shelters in a 4-block radius of Hope Faith. With this potential permanent expansion, there will be three large emergency shelters (City UM, reStart, HF) within a 3-block radius, plus Nourish KC's lunch program, The BeeHive and Care Beyond the Boulevard at 8th and Paseo. This density of emergency services far exceeds any recommended "cluster" and is essentially a brick and mortar skid row.
- There are 38 families at Rose Hill Townhomes at Troost & Admiral - a voucher-based housing development operated by the Housing Authority; many of the residents have come directly from experiencing homelessness or relocated from Choteau. Just under 200 units of affordable housing are ready for occupancy at Jazz Hill on Paseo from 10th to Truman. The message being sent to these residents by the City is not one of support and encouragement but one of stigma and labeling.
- The proposed low barrier shelter site is in the Paseo Gateway Plan Area;

the City should be focusing on development and commercial amenities and opportunities in the area - not more broken promises. Our public spaces and street environments are not safe for those living and working in the impacted areas - including those participating in services. The City and other private, state and federal funding sources have invested millions of dollars in the Paseo Gateway, including projects such as Choice Neighborhoods, Rose Hill Townhomes and Jazz Hill. The proposed investment of \$7.1 in one low-barrier shelter provider undermines the success of these investments.

4) A collaborative, collective approach to providing low barrier shelter would place Kansas City among the most innovative metro regions in the nation and - more importantly - a leader in resolving homelessness by reducing the number of persons experiencing street homelessness, reducing the length of time and frequency of episodes of homelessness and diverting persons from entering the homeless services system. Rather than serving the funding and administrative needs of one provider, a collective would support multiple agencies. Instead, the Ordinance supports a Winner Take All contract.

- Kansas City has numerous and diverse agencies serving persons needing low barrier shelter and with a strong historic track record for serving the most vulnerable populations as delineated earlier. Many providers already have facilities that meet the federal requirements for non-congregate shelter; others would require only minor renovations to do so.
- Federal funds could be better used to LEVERAGE those already existing agencies and their facilities through multiple contracts and/or subcontracts and ALSO provide funding for the Incentivized Services Improvement Districts. The proposed sole contractor would utilize almost three-quarters of the award in reconstruction - an undertaking that could take one year - 18 months to complete (at a minimum).
- The funds could be distributed to a collective of agencies (and include funds for renovation as well as fundraising staff) that would be set up to manage the contracts/subcontracts and a management team would be funded through the funds designated for administration. The collective could provide a source of pooled funds to stretch them more efficiently in critical program areas, including security, maintenance, fiscal management, tracking and reporting outcomes, and fundraising.
- Acceptable thresholds regarding the number of units and/or beds and professional staffing could be more efficiently achieved through a multi-site collective.

- In short, a reissuance of the RFP would bring it more in alignment with the federal guidelines as stated below in the current RFP.

“HOME-ARP funds may be used to acquire, rehabilitate, or construct a non-congregate shelter (NCS) for individuals and families in qualifying populations. NCS provides private units or rooms as temporary shelter to individuals and families and does not require occupants to sign a lease or occupancy agreement. By expanding the number of shelter beds in a non-congregate setting, the City of Kansas City and its housing partners will be able to better meet the needs of Kansas City’s homeless population and connect these households to permanent housing options. Supportive Services HOME-ARP funds may be used to provide a broad range of supportive services to qualified individuals.”

Thank you for your time and consideration and for all you do for Kansas City.



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