



Homeless Commission

ACTION CALENDAR

April 26, 2022

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Homeless Commission

Submitted by: Paul Kealoha-Blake, Chairperson, Homeless Commission

Subject: Expansion of Storm Shelter Program to Emergencies not Otherwise Covered

RECOMMENDATION

To direct the City Manager to expand the Berkeley Emergency Storm Shelter (BESS) to emergencies not otherwise covered including outside the dates of the current contract with Dorothy Day House.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

The fiscal impacts of the recommendation are best identified by the City Manager's office. Since the scope of the recommendation is to extend the Berkeley Emergency Storm Shelter to emergencies, the nature of emergencies is that they are unpredictable. Thus, it is unknown to what degree this recommendation needs additional monies to be implemented and whether it requires a referral to the Council Budget Committee or not.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

Dorothy Day House has operated the Berkeley Emergency Storm Shelter for almost 20 years, providing overnight shelter on a first come-first served basis for up to 45 people per night. Initially, the contract for BESS was for 45 days per year but in the last two years has been expanded. The BESS shelter opens if rain or temperatures at or below 40 degrees are expected overnight. The City's contract requires that Dorothy Day House take on this role beginning November 16th of this year.

On October 25, 2021-October 26, 2021, the City of Berkeley had a severe storm. Since this storm transpired prior to the November 10th BESS opening date, unhoused persons throughout Berkeley were left subject to the elements, endangering their health and safety, because they could not access the BESS shelter.

In addition to potential storm conditions, such as the one on October 25th-October 26th, there are no provisions for the emergency storm shelter to be open in other unrelated emergencies such as an earthquake, a fire, pipes bursting in another shelter or any other unanticipated emergency. The shelter should be expanded for these purposes.

BACKGROUND

On November 15, 2021, the Homeless Commission passed a motion as follows:

That City Council refer to the City Manager to expand the emergency storm shelter program to emergencies not otherwise covered including outside the dates of the current contract with Dorothy Day House.

M/S/C Marasovic/Kealoha-Blake move that City Council refer to the City Manager to expand the emergency storm shelter program to emergencies not otherwise covered including outside the dates of the current contract with Dorothy Day House.

Vote: Ayes: Marasovic, Andrew, Gomez, Kealoha-Blake.

Noes: None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Behm-Steinberg.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

It is the environment that controls the issues in this recommendation. This recommendation is consistent with emergency preparedness needs for the unhoused community.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The need for emergency shelter is not necessarily governed by definitive dates. As the October 25, 2021/ October 26, 2021 storm showed, nature operates on its own timing. In addition, an emergency storm shelter should be available for the unhoused in other emergencies such as earthquakes, fires or conditions that render where they might be staying uninhabitable.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

The contract could remain the same in which case the City will not be prepared to provide emergency shelter in any situations outside the scope of the current contract.

CITY MANAGER

See companion report.

CONTACT PERSON

Josh Jacobs, Homeless Services Coordinator (510) 225-8035