

Mayor Rhodes-Conway, County Executive Parisi: Announce partnership to build permanent men's shelter

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Today Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway and Dane County Executive Joe Parisi announced that they have found a location for a permanent men's shelter on the East Side of Madison. A new facility at 4111 E. Town Blvd. will provide a home for shelter services that have been forced to operate out of cramped quarters in downtown churches for the past 35 years.

This site was selected after an extensive search by City real estate, which examined dozens of possible locations.

"The need for purpose-built shelter in Madison has been talked about for years; it is time now for us to act. Our ultimate goal is to develop a purpose-built shelter facility to support single homeless men. Our aim is to do more than just warehouse men, it is to offer a fuller range of supports that can lead its users to more stable long-term housing," said the Mayor. "I want to thank the churches that have so kindly opened their doors to the City's homeless population each winter for decades. We are finally on the path to a better accommodation."

The need for modern facilities to house the homeless has long been known. The City and the County have worked together cooperatively to rapidly house homeless families and individuals during the COVID-19 pandemic, moving people out of cramped quarters and into hotels and other accommodations. Because of this swift

action there have been few cases of COVID in shelters. Homeless men are currently housed at Warner Park Community Center.

“Communities come together during challenging times and today marks the start of a robust, new partnership to meet the needs of our most vulnerable citizens,” County Executive Joe Parisi said. “By teaming with the City of Madison and other partners we are making this community’s strongest public investment yet in night sheltering services.”

The property being acquired at 4111 E. Towne Blvd and the cost is \$1.3M. The Mayor will be seeking support from the Common Council for \$3M in the City’s Capital Budget to support the acquisition and renovation of property for use as a permanent men’s shelter. This will match a \$3M commitment made by the County Executive in his 2021 budget.

The appeal of this acquisition is that it provides both a structure that can fairly quickly be converted to use as an overnight shelter and a site large enough to accommodate a broader array of services, potentially including laundry services, kitchen services and more.

Moving forward, the task is to consult with the public and to build on conversations that have already begun regarding the scope of services to provide. Those decisions, to be made collaboratively by the City, the County and other community stakeholders will, in turn, determine the scale and design of a new facility.