

City of Madison and Dane County: Announce location of permanent men's shelter

Posted on Wednesday, Mar 9, 2022

>> WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)

Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway and County Executive Joe Parisi today announced the selection of a location on which to build a permanent shelter facility serving men experiencing homeless. The property, 1902 Bartillon Drive, is already owned by the City. The leaders committed to work together and with the network of local service providers and other community stakeholders to develop the shelter, secure needed resources, and ensure its successful operation.

“Today is a new day in Madison’s approach to homeless services,” said Mayor Rhodes-Conway, “This site has access to amenities, including transit, but more importantly, it is large enough to build a facility that will provide safety, dignity and opportunity for people experiencing homelessness.”

The long-awaited selection of the site marks a key development in plans to develop shelter space that can provide more safe and dignified services. For decades, emergency shelter services relied on spaces made available by churches in downtown Madison. But their physical limitations posed challenges for shelter operations. When the pandemic emerged in early 2020, they were unable to meet public health safety standards and were closed. The new facility will be the city’s first purpose-built shelter, designed to offer a safer, more attractive shelter that will help those experiencing homelessness get connected to housing.

“We are happy to partner with the City of Madison on this project to provide our most vulnerable residents with the space and shelter they need to stay safe,” said Dane County Executive Joe Parisi. “Dane County has allocated \$3 million to help acquire and construct the site to best fit our community’s needs.”

Next week, a resolution will go to the Common Council seeking approval for the site and setting the stage for key next steps, namely, selecting a design consultant and an operator. Design work is expected to take most of the rest of this year and construction could begin in early 2023. Together, the City and County have already budgeted \$9 million toward the budget and will learn final cost estimates as design work proceeds.

“The City and County must continue to collaborate in finding effective ways to support individuals experiencing housing insecurity and must commit to a budget that prioritizes their health and safety,” said Madison Alder Yanette Figueroa Cole. “The private sector, non-profit organizations and the community must continue to engage and to be a leading force on these efforts. It is time to turn the page and to focus our efforts on creating a place where people not only get shelter but the services they need to thrive.”

“I am eager to get the process moving on this project, and am happy we are able to take this initial step,” said Dane County Board Chair Analiese Eicher. “We’ve heard from the community for a long time that this is a priority. As we move forward we will continue doing everything we can to find more permanent stable housing for those experiencing housing insecurity.”

Mayor Rhodes Conway also announced that the temporary men’s shelter, currently located in the former City Fleet Maintenance facility at First Street, will move later this year to another City-owned property on Zeier Road where it will remain until the new shelter opens. The First Street facility is slated to be renovated to become the Madison Public Market. That project received a much needed boost last month when Gov. Evers awarded it a \$4M State grant. Renovation is scheduled to begin late this summer by which time the Zeier Road property will be ready for use as a temporary shelter.

Brenda Konkell, a long-time advocate for improved homeless services, and current board chair of the Homeless Services Consortium, the organization representing local service providers, welcomed today’s announcement: “We applaud the City’s and County’s commitment to this project and look forward to helping bring about an intentionally built space equipped to serve men experiencing homelessness with the dignity they deserve.”