

City of Madison: City and County announce additional \$9 million investment in men's homeless shelter

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County Executive Joe Parisi and Mayor Rhodes-Conway announced major developments today in the ongoing partnership between the City and the County to support the construction of the state's first shelter for men experiencing homelessness. With construction planned for 2024, this 40,000 square foot facility will have space for 200 people. It will be located on 1902 Bartillon Drive on the City's Eastside.

County Executive Joe Parisi announced his 2023 Capital Budget, which will be released October 3, 2022, will include \$6 million to support the men's homeless shelter project. This is the single largest capital investment in the County Budget. Dane County previously committed \$3 million for this work, but is tripling the allocation as a continuation of its focus to address homelessness with long-term solutions that aim to get people into stable housing. Coupled with \$10 million from the City, and a \$2 million Federal grant secured by Congressman Mark Pocan, the shelter is on a strong footing for future success.

"We are happy to continue our partnership with the City of Madison on developing a men's shelter," said Dane County Executive Joe Parisi. "Allocating this \$9 million in funding will advance development of a humane and trauma-informed solution that keeps our most vulnerable residents safe."

When the 2019 COVID-19 pandemic struck, for the protection of homeless men and the community, the City acted quickly to move the shelter from the basement of

Grace Episcopal Church on the Capitol Square, where it had been housed for over 30 years, and set up a series of much safer, temporary shelters at City-owned properties. At the same time, the County moved to partner with area hotels to shelter people experiencing homelessness considered at higher risk for severe illness if they contracted COVID-19, and to set up a quarantine and isolation program for those confirmed positive for COVID-19, symptomatic, or a close contact to someone with the virus.

In addition to providing non-congregate shelter through hotels for an estimated 400 unique individuals since the pandemic began, Dane County also launched a historic \$13 million re-housing initiative known as Hotels to Housing in the summer of 2021. This program, combined with an expansion of community housing navigation services, has helped more than 250 households exit hotel shelter and obtain permanent housing of their own.

Rather than trying to convert an existing space that was built for an entirely different use, the men's shelter will be designed with specific uses in mind to ensure the highest levels of safety and functionality possible. For example, the planned shelter will offer isolation and quarantine quarters on site, in lieu of needing to use hotels.

- The new shelter facility is expected to include:
- Trauma-informed design offering safe, dignified accommodations complete with restroom, shower, kitchen and laundry facilities;
- Space for isolation and quarantine beds and other design elements to improve air quality and overall guest health and safety;
- A focus on a welcoming space, natural light and other design features to enhance environmental sustainability and reduce operating costs; and
- Space to accommodate a host of supportive services that will help connect shelter users to stable housing.

This represents a new and different approach to addressing the challenge of homelessness in our community, and will require expanded partnerships between government, non-profit organizations, and the community.

“A purpose-built shelter with housing-focused services will fill a critical need in our community,” said Mayor Satya. “County and City government has an important role to play in addressing this persistent, and growing, challenge. The combined commitment of \$21 million toward a purpose-built shelter, set forth in our respective capital budgets, is a long overdue step to fill a gap in our community. But for this facility to be successful in connecting people experiencing homelessness with stable housing, we must also be willing to invest in this comprehensive approach. Government cannot do all of this without help from the private sector.”

The Mayor noted City, County and Federal commitments, while critical, will not be sufficient to sustain the shelter in the long term. She indicated she would be launching an effort in coming months to seek private sector help to ensure the facility’s longer-term success.

The Common Council recently selected an architectural and engineering design consultant and is expected to take up the choice of a facility operator in a resolution to be introduced on September 6th. Opportunities for public comment and input will be during the pre-design process, which is expected to continue through the end of the year. Construction could begin by the end of next year.