



Housing Authority
of the
City of Alameda

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To: Board of Commissioners

From: Sylvia Martinez, Director of Housing Development\

Date: August 23, 2023

Re: Overview and Discussion of Permanent Supportive Housing, the Coordinated Entry System, and Future Operations at Estuary I and Estuary II

BACKGROUND

The Housing Authority of the City of Alameda (AHA) is leading the development of the 12- acre North Housing parcel redevelopment at the former Alameda Naval Air Station (NAS), formerly known as Coast Guard Housing. under a homeless accommodation conveyance signed with the Navy and the City of Alameda, including the parties of AHA, the Alameda Point Collaborative (APC) and Building Futures (BF).

Island City Development (ICD) is the developer of Estuary I and Estuary 11, which are two phases of permanent supportive housing for the homeless which are meant to be operated together as one site (“The Estuary”) once fully built. The two projects total 91 units, including one manager’s unit.

DISCUSSION

There are several pertinent issues under consideration for operations at The Estuary.

Phased approach

The Estuary was planned to be built in two phases because a single phase would have been very difficult and time-consuming to finance (because of size). As two phases, the development could open and begin services as quickly as possible. As of August 2023, it is now clear that The Estuary I (44 restricted units with one property manager unit) will begin construction in the next six months.

In the best scenario, The Estuary II (46 restricted units) will start construction by the end of 2024 (approximately 6-12 months after the



first phase). However, it may be further delayed due to the highly competitive nature of the affordable housing financing environment in California.

Anticipating this phased approach, The Estuary was designed to be able to fully run with only one phase. The offices/community spaces were designed to be built during the first phase, and then to convert and expand once the second phase is developed. Likewise, the operating budget for the first phase is meant to be adequate for 44 residential units, while the operating budget increases and provides economies of scale once the second phase is added.

Robust Social Services and Target Population

All three parties (ICD, APC, and BF) desire to have robust social services at this development, to ensure the quality of life and successful housing tenure of the residents. As part of the design and development of the service program and budget, the three parties have discussed the target population, including various populations such as the chronically homeless, other homeless, and homeless veterans. Because of the financing of the development, all the parties understand that the apartments will be filled by referrals from the County of Alameda Coordinated Entry System (CES) which identifies and categorizes clients and makes referrals to developments.

Together, the parties successfully worked with the County of Alameda Health Care Services Agency for in kind funding of \$550/client/month (\$6,600/year) to support an on-site case management staff ratio of 1:25 and related costs. There is a higher level of funding available from the County, at a lower staff to client ratio, for more severely vulnerable clients at \$750/client/month (\$9,000/year) However, Alameda Point Collaborative and Building Futures expressly requested the ratio and levels shown above. It should be noted that Alameda Point Collaborative and Building Futures are experienced with the County of Alameda and its services programs and will receive a contract directly with the County for these services.

In addition to this funding, which is targeted at intensive case management, The Estuary operating budget is providing additional wrap around service funding of approximately \$5,000/client/year for service coordination, community building activities, economic empowerment, supplies and overhead. With three full-time case managers, and there are two full-time resident services coordinator positions in addition, which brings the case management ratio to 1:25 and the service staff overall ratio to 1:16.



It should be noted that The Estuary will operate under Housing First principles, where client choice and engagement are critical to creating housing that is a platform from which they can pursue personal goals and improve their quality of life. Referrals may include clients that may not have addressed all their problems, or clients that have graduated from a transitional housing program such as those currently operated by Alameda Point Collaborative, Building Futures or Five Keys (Dignity Village, in coordination with the City of Alameda). While it is hoped that clients will stabilize, ongoing stressful episodes can be expected at such sites. The robust social services are thus planned to be maintained throughout the lifetime of the development to support resolution of such incidences.

Security

Security onsite is of particular interest. First and foremost, safety and responsiveness to the needs of residents is critical. If a resident falls, is in distress, or feels unsafe, their needs need to be addressed rapidly. In addition, care needs to be taken such that outside influences do not make the residents or property unsafe. Many PSH developments, which are frequently situated in heavily urban environments, need to be very careful about building entry and visitors. However, it should be noted that The

The estuary is in a much more suburban location, which means that it does not have the same environmental impacts as a development in an urban or downtown non-residential neighborhood. It should be noted that Dignity Village, operated nearby on Fifth Street in Alameda, keeps its doors open during the day.

The Estuary has been physically designed for the security of the residents. For instance, there is a single street facing the main entry, that is monitored by electric key fob and cameras. The secondary entry, through the parking lot and courtyard, can be shut off during evening and weekend hours to assure further security. The courtyard is fenced and landscaped with shrubs along the fence, unlike the design of other ICD developments. There is a welcoming lobby that includes a desk that can be staffed by property management, services, or resident volunteers to provide greetings and look out for the community. ICD expects that all staff will be staggered to provide a greater window of presence than a typical 8 AM - 5 PM, Monday - Friday workweek.

For evenings, weekends, and times when additional presences is needed, ICD proposes a remote guarding system that has been used with success by other owners of similar developments, even in much



more urban locations, to provide non-intrusive but safe environments. Please see the panel on Security Innovations for Supportive Housing: From Design to Operations at the link below for more information.
<https://link.zixcentral.com/u/b7ad3b45/xmwJndxc6xGQBiPJhnsomg?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3DQdX6nxzxfOs%26feature%3Dyoutu.be>

These systems have voice down capabilities that can help direct residents or building visitors as needed. The systems also provide reporting that can assist emergency personnel, property management, and services staff to respond to resident issues in an appropriate manner. Some individuals with experiences of trauma find the cameras to be a less-intrusive system, as it avoids the perception that they are being watched. The protocol for the remote guarding system (i.e., de-escalation, who to call for emergencies or urgent items, type of voice down requests or activities) are developed in collaboration with property management and services. It is very typical for the team to have 24/7 responsiveness due to the nature of the development and population, and that this is a shared responsibility as such incidents are lease violations, but others may reflect a mental or health concern. The operation of permanent supportive housing is always a very hands-on, multi-team member, activity.

The alternative to a remote guarding system is a 'front desk system.' These are typically used for transitional housing or shelters, and every individual, whether staff, residents, guests, vendors, service providers, etc., is required to sign in and sign out. Front desk staff are typically hired by a third-party security company and are generally a low-paid and low-trained workforce. There are frequent issues with absenteeism and inappropriate responsiveness. More and more, respected owners and managers such as BRIDGE, Wakeland Housing, Affirmed, McCormack Baron, Mercy and John Stewart Company are utilizing remote guarding systems or equivalent as part of their response to safety.

Comparison to Other Similar Projects

The operating and supportive service budget exceeds the minimums required by all proposed public funding programs, all of which are based upon similar populations and geographic regions. In addition, the attached document shows where the budget compares to a recent study by the Turner Center. See <https://turnercenter.berkeley.edu/blog/psh-homelessness-cost/> for more details. The study emphasizes that projects in suburban areas (such as Alameda) that have only one target population (as is proposed for The Estuary) are generally on the lower end of operating and



service budgets. With a combined operating and service budget of \$22,547, including services/costs paid for by the County, The Estuary exceeds all total budgets for similar developments serving a single population. As noted in the Turner Center Report, "the properties with the highest costs per unit -\$20,000 per unit per year - tended to serve four [distinct] PSH populations." Turner Center, 2023.

FISCAL IMPACT

Not applicable

CEQA

Not applicable

RECOMMENDATION

Overview and Discussion of Permanent Supportive Housing, the Coordinated Entry System, and Future Operations at Estuary I and II

ATTACHMENTS

(none)

Respectfully,

Sylvia Martinez, Director of Housing Development

