



Moses Lake City Council

Dustin Swartz, Mayor | Judy Madewell, Deputy Mayor | Don Myers, Council Member | Mark Fancher, Council Member
Deanna Martinez, Council Member | David Skaug, Council Member | Victor Lombardi, Council Member

Special Meeting Agenda

Moses Lake Civic Center – 401 S. Balsam

Friday, April 18, 2025

Call to Order – 11 a.m.

#1 Homelessness Services Discussion

Adjournment

Next Regular Council Meeting is scheduled for April 22, 2025

MEMORANDUM

TO: Moses Lake City Council

DATE: 4/18/2025

SUBJECT: Evaluation of the City's Role in Human Services & Strategic Planning for the Open Doors Sleep Center

Purpose

This memo provides an overview of the City of Moses Lake's current involvement in homeless housing services and outlines the considerations the City Council should consider in determining the appropriate scope of municipal responsibility moving forward. This includes a review of program operations, local partnerships, and financial investment. The information is provided to help the Council evaluate how to maintain **public safety, fiscal discipline, community standards, and responsible governance**.

Clarifying the City's Role in Human Services

The City Council has the opportunity to define the appropriate level of municipal involvement in social and human services. Three general categories are presented for consideration:

1. **Core and Basic Services Only**

The City would return to providing essential municipal services such as public safety, utilities, streets, parks, and land use. Social services would be administered by the county, state, and nonprofits.

Implication: The City would discontinue direct involvement in the Sleep Center or similar programs.

2. **Coordination Role**

The City continues to provide core services but serves as a limited facilitator. This includes coordinating with local nonprofits and allocating minimal financial contributions.

Examples: Annual support to the Grant County Health District or Moses Lake Community Coalition.

Implication: The Sleep Center would no longer be a City-operated initiative.

3. **Direct Service Role**

The City directly funds, and/or receives grant awards, and facilitates programs such as emergency shelter, case management, and contracted outreach. The Open Doors Sleep Center currently reflects this level of involvement.

Implication: Continued operation would maintain the City in a direct service capacity with sustained fiscal and administrative responsibility.

Councils' direction on the preferred model will shape long-term City involvement and determine whether the Sleep Center remains active in the community.

Existing Public Safety & Supportive Resources in Moses Lake

- **CARES Coordinator (Fire Dept.):** Provides field navigation, case management, and referral for high-needs individuals.
- **Moses Lake Police & Code Enforcement:** Respond to encampments, welfare checks, and nuisance concerns.
- **Parks and Recreation & Public Works:** Facilitate and organize encampment clean ups on City and Public Property.
- **Grant County Crisis Responder:** Coordinates mental health interventions alongside law enforcement on a limited schedule (up to 4 days a week).

Several local and regional programs offer non-City-based support services to address homelessness, behavioral health, and public safety:

- **RENEW Behavioral Health:** Offers behavioral health services and treatment referrals for individuals experiencing mental health issues and or substance abuse disorders.
- **Recovery Navigator Program:** A Non-profit peer-led outreach for individuals struggling with substance use.
- **Grant County Housing Authority:** Provides affordable housing, rental assistance, and homelessness prevention services through programs such as public housing, Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8), and emergency rental aid.
- **HopeSource:** Services include operating the Open Doors Sleep Center, eviction prevention, utility support, transitional housing, and free educational programs.

These are only a handful of the many partners in the community that offer alternatives for service without requiring the City to assume direct program control or facility management.

Planning for a Responsible Transition if the Sleep Center Closes

If the City exits direct service provision and allows the Sleep Center to close, a **multi-pronged transition strategy** will be necessary to protect public safety, maintain order, and prepare enforcement personnel. The strategy should include:

- **Ordinance Revisions:** Update public camping and nuisance codes to align with legal precedent and enable enforcement.
- **Public Property Rules & Signage:** Improve signage to deter misuse and reinforce expectations.
- **Encampment Restoration:** Create and educate staff on appropriate procedures of encampment intervention and site restoration.
- **Public Awareness Campaign:** Community education efforts to clarify that homelessness is not inherently criminal and that law enforcement responds to behavior-based concerns. The campaign will also outline the appropriate procedures for addressing issues on public and private property, helping residents understand the limitations of enforcement.
- **Community Mobilization:** Encourage churches, volunteers, and nonprofits to assist in service delivery.
- **Resource Guides:** Equip police and first responders with updated lists of available shelters and support services.
- **Regional Shelter Contact:** Establish formal contact with regional service providers for potential referrals.
- **Internal Readiness:** Ensure Police, Fire, Parks, and Code Enforcement staff are trained and prepared for a post-shelter model.

Such steps would allow the City to withdraw from direct homeless services while maintaining public order and upholding community standards.

Closure of the Open Doors Sleep Center will result in expenses to the City's general fund, as these costs are not eligible for grant reimbursement. These expenses include approximately \$15,125 for the ground lease through September 30, 2025, costs related to site restoration and disposal of shelter structures, additional expenses associated with returning leased restroom and office units to their original condition, and potential unanticipated costs related to site closure activities.

Conclusion

The decision to maintain, reduce, or withdraw from direct homeless service delivery should reflect the Council's long-term vision for the role of local government in addressing homelessness. This memo presents a factual overview of program information, legal context, and strategic options to support a transparent and responsible decision-making process.

Staff are prepared to implement any direction Council sets, prioritizing fiscal responsibility, legal compliance, and community safety.

2024 ANNUAL REVIEW

HOMELESS HOUSING PROGRAM

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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CITY OF MOSES LAKE

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INTRODUCTION

The City of Moses Lake Community Development Department is pleased to present the 2024 Annual Review of the Homeless Housing Program. This report highlights the ongoing commitment to addressing homelessness through proactive community engagement, targeted housing solutions, and strategic resource allocation. Over the past year, the program has focused on expanding supportive services, enhancing collaboration with local and regional stakeholders, and improving outcomes for our community members in need of temporary support.

In 2024, dedicated efforts resulted in measurable progress, including increasing participants in the Multi-family Tax Exemption (MFTE) Program, strengthened support networks, and the continuation of initiatives aimed at addressing homelessness. This review outlines achievements, identifies continuing challenges, and provides additional information regarding the Homeless Housing program.

This report is designed to inform strategic discussions by providing a high-level overview of program functions, outcomes, and challenges encountered throughout the year. All findings are presented without interpretation or recommendation to support independent evaluation and future policy direction by the City Council.

We extend our gratitude to the community partners, service providers, city leadership, and the citizens of Moses Lake whose collective efforts have made these accomplishments possible. Together, we will continue working towards our goal of ensuring safe, sustainable, and affordable housing for every member of our community.

MULTI-FAMILY TAX EXEMPTION PROGRAM

Throughout 2024, the MFTE program has successfully incentivized developers and property owners to invest in multi-family housing projects, resulting in progress toward meeting the city's housing needs.

Two new developments were approved, Prattville Duplexes and Aspen Townhomes, increasing the availability of affordable and market-rate housing options, particularly in high-demand areas.

There are four properties in the MFTE program, providing 61 additional units for the residential target area. These projects not only expanded housing choices but also contributed positively to neighborhood revitalization and economic vitality in the designated residential target area.

The 2024 MFTE Program demonstrated effectiveness in meeting its primary objectives, including:

- Stimulating construction of high-quality multi-family residential developments.
- Providing affordable housing opportunities to low- and moderate-income residents.
- Supporting sustainable urban density and smart-growth planning.
- Encouraging private-sector investment and revitalization efforts within targeted areas of Moses Lake.

Challenges identified this year include rising construction costs, vacancy rates, and ongoing affordability pressures in the local housing market. To address these, the City may choose to explore adjustments in program guidelines, expanding the Residential Target Area, and further collaboration with stakeholders.

Looking forward, Moses Lake will continue refining the MFTE Program to better align with community goals, enhance program participation, and effectively address evolving housing demands.

THE OPEN DOORS SLEEP CENTER

Introduction

The Open Doors Sleep Center is an emergency, low-barrier overnight shelter dedicated to providing immediate assistance to individuals experiencing homelessness. The Open Doors Sleep Center is a contracted partnership between Hopesource and the City of Moses Lake, funded by the Emergency Housing Fund Grant awarded by Grant County.

Throughout 2024, the Open Doors Sleep Center sheltered a total of 323 unique individuals. The shelter facilitated 234 positive outcomes, meaning transitioning clients into more stable living situations and reunification with family members. A total of 11,244 bed nights were provided in 2024.

The annual Point-in-Time (PIT) count, an annual census conducted to identify and quantify individuals experiencing homelessness, identified 207 unsheltered individuals in all of Grant County, with 79 being Moses Lake residents.

Out of 323 individuals served by the Sleep Center, the following has been reported:

196 individuals reported having a disability

140 individuals reported having a mental health disorder

96 individuals reported having a substance use disorder

75 individuals reported having a chronic health condition

79 individuals reported being chronically homeless

15 individuals reported a veteran status

192 individuals reported no income

The Sleep Center provided services, including overnight shelter, referrals to wraparound services (employment, behavioral health, housing, and substance abuse support), and direct access to hygiene items, showers, and food on a first-come, first-served basis.

Partnerships

Community partnerships are the foundation for sustainable success at the Open Doors Sleep Center. These partnerships include Care Moses Lake, community member Randy, Papa Johns, Soup on Saturdays, Corner St Donuts, Crumbl, Tacos el Rey, Malone Life Church 360, the Moses Lake Food Bank, Daze of Camelot Animal Sanctuary, and numerous other anonymous community members. Additionally, the Open Doors Sleep center hosted two Community Resource Fairs and weekly outreach in efforts to engage and refer individuals to local organizations and services. Local outreach efforts include partnerships with the Grant County Health District (GCHD), the Recovery Navigator Program (RNP), RENEW Behavioral Health, the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, Grant County Community Court Program, the Salvation Army, Goodwill Workforce and Family Services, Compass Career Solutions, and Skillsource.



Community Resource Fair at ODSC August 2024

From September through December 2024, coordinated outreach by GCHD, RENEW Behavioral Health, and the RNP team resulted in 723 interactions at the Open Doors Sleep Center. These targeted interactions provided the distribution of items such as food, hygiene supplies, clothing, shoes, and Naloxone. Additionally, individuals were connected to further supportive services.

Partners in the Community

- RNP successfully transitioned 30 individuals into treatment
- Sleep Center staff successfully transitioned 12 individuals into treatment
- Community Court graduated 6 participants out of program

These outreach activities underscore the importance of building trust and rapport with vulnerable individuals. Establishing trust encourages consistent engagement, facilitates effective service delivery, and creates lasting pathways toward greater independence, improved community safety, and long-term stability.

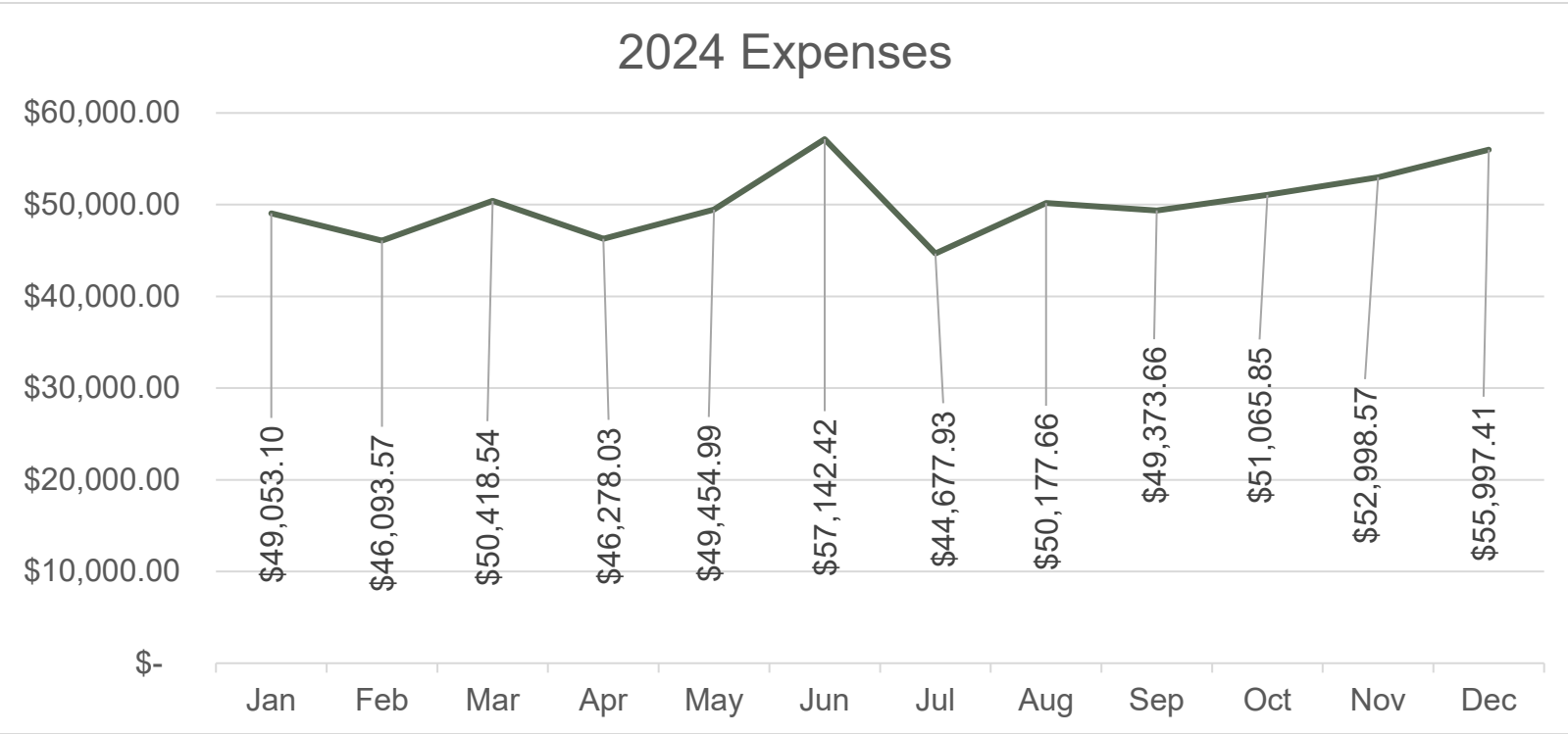
Operational Highlights

- **January:** Conducted PIT count; issued RFP for Sleep Center Operational Management
- **April:** Community clean-up event led by unhoused individuals
- **May:** Pallet Shelters received
- **June:** Emergency Housing Fund Grant awarded
- **July:** Outreach efforts initiated to encampments
- **August:** Walgreens vaccine clinic held on-site; Community Resource Fair held
- **September:** Coordinated service providers for encampment project with MLPD
- **October:** ADA site improvements initiated; second Community Resource Fair
- **November:** Temporary Use Area created at Sleep center
- **December:** Microbial (Mold) testing conducted

During 2024, the program encountered and proactively addressed several operational challenges, including maintenance issues with hygiene facilities, necessary improvements for ADA compliance, and increased shelter demand impacting capacity. Addressing these operational concerns responsibly and efficiently is essential to sustaining program effectiveness, ensuring public accountability, and optimizing the prudent use of community resources moving forward.

Financials

Financially, the Sleep Center had a total revenue of \$698,537.32 in 2024, largely supported through the Emergency Housing Fund Grant and Document Recording Fees in partnership with Grant County. Additional revenue sources include the Emergency Food and Shelter Program, Affordable & Supplemental housing dollars, and allocated American Rescue Plan Act dollars. The Sleep Center was operated entirely with grant funding in 2024, ensuring no additional financial burden to local taxpayers.



Total of \$500,820 expensed in 2024 through Grant Funding

In 2024, the Open Doors Sleep Center operated with a total annual expense of **\$500,820**. Based on the 323 unique individuals served throughout the year, the average cost per guest was approximately **\$1,550**. With a total of 11,244 bed nights provided, the cost per bed night equated to about **\$44.54**. These figures highlight the financial investment required to deliver shelter and supportive services, emphasizing both the center’s operational scale and its role in meeting critical community needs.

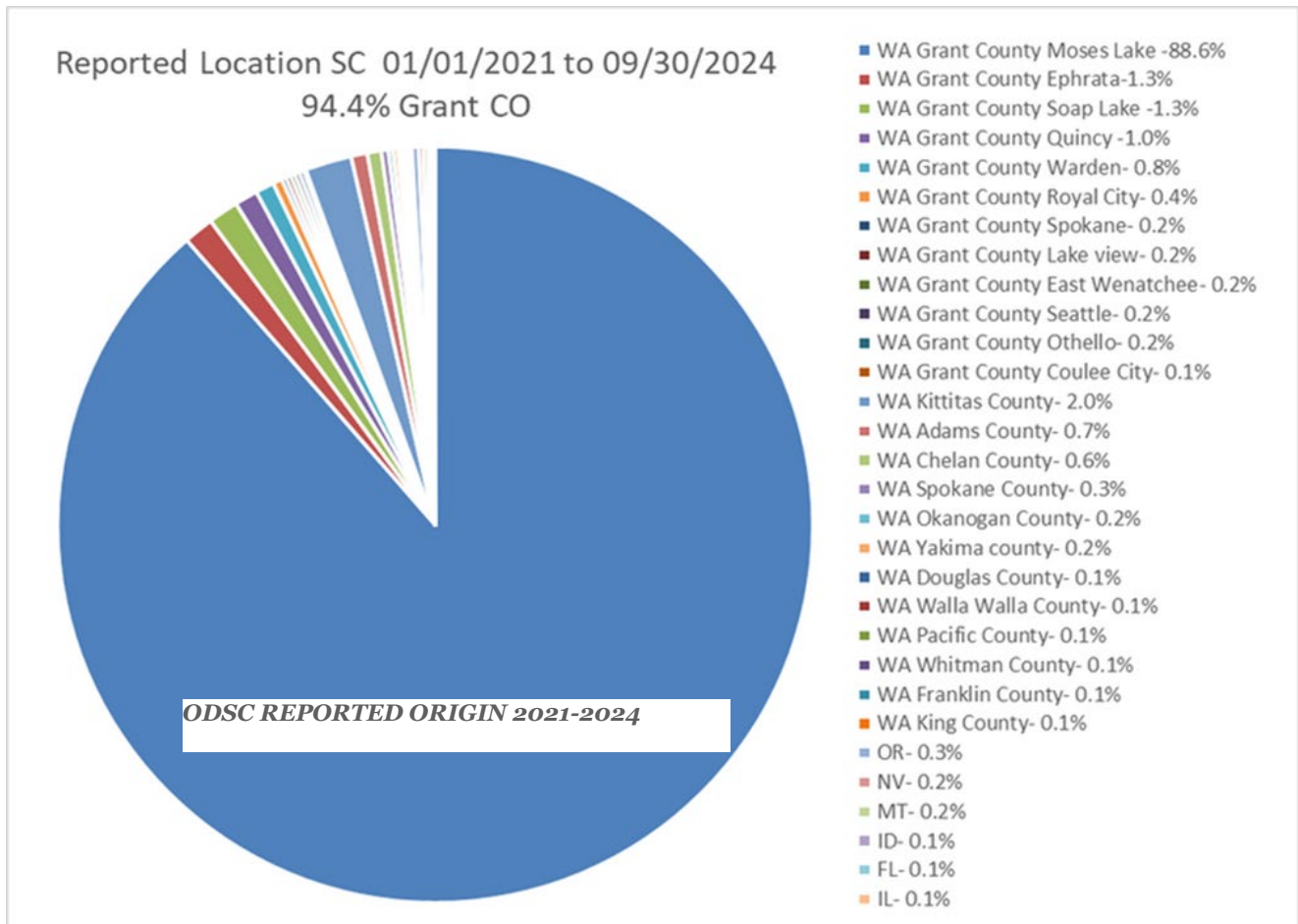
Revenues and Expenses- Open Doors Sleep Center

REVENUES		DESCRIPTION	
AFFORDABLE & SUPP HOUSING	HB1406 FUNDS	\$	55,712.17
STATE GRANT - COMMERCE HOMELESS	GRANT- EHF	\$	534,226.87
RECORDING SURCHG- LOCAL HOMELESS	RECORDING FEES	\$	103,598.18
CONTRIBUTIONS HOMELESS	FEMA GRANT	\$	5,000.00
TRANS-IN-FROM 105 ARPA	CITY ARPA	\$	585,926.08
FED IND DEPT OF TREASURY	EHG GRANT	\$	695,573.60
	TOTAL REVENUES	\$	1,980,036.90
EXPENSES			
Operations & Facility			
Ground Works	Ground Lease	\$	65,541.71
Ground Works	Taxes	\$	3,540.38
Willscot	Restroom Lease	\$	11,125.47
Willscot	Office Lease	\$	15,291.79
Grant County PUD		\$	2,494.39
City of ML Utilities		\$	9,245.83
Basin Septic	Sanitation Services	\$	2,420.00
Basin Propane		\$	672.47
General Laundry	Laundry Services	\$	22,521.69
Security		\$	95,366.14
HopeSource		\$	259,145.84
Maintenance		\$	155.74
Other Supplies		\$	13,298.55
	OPERATIONAL EXPENSE TOTAL	\$	500,820.86
	OPERATING REVENUES (EHF)	\$	534,226.87
	EHF GRANT BALANCE	\$	33,406.01
Capital Improvements			
Pallet Shelter	Purchase	\$	585,926.08
Grant County	ARPA Reimbursement	\$	585,926.08
Engineer reimb. Labor	Sleep center renovations	\$	15,054.91
ADA Improvements	Sleep center renovations	\$	2,480.80
	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$	1,690,207.87
	REVENUES	\$	1,980,036.90
	EXPENSES	\$	1,690,207.87
	BALANCE	\$	289,829.03

Key financial and operational milestones approaching include the conclusion of the grant award cycle on June 30, 2024, and planning for the new grant award effective July 1, 2025. Additionally, the site lease ends on September 30, 2025, necessitating planning for subsequent steps, including the closure of the Pallet Shelter contract (\$47,155.99 outstanding), and next steps for the Open Doors Sleep Center.

Findings

Since its inception (2021 through September 2024), 88.6% of clients (approximately 730 individuals) accessing the shelter have reported originating from Moses Lake, with over 94% from Grant County overall.



Accessible shelter services have been shown to reduce public costs associated with emergency response. Studies have found that individuals experiencing chronic homelessness can cost taxpayers an average of \$30,000–\$50,000 per year due to frequent emergency room visits, ambulance calls, and law enforcement interactions ([National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2020](#)). Programs like the Open Doors Sleep Center aim to mitigate these costs by providing immediate shelter and direct connections to preventative healthcare and housing resources, potentially decreasing the burden on public services.

Closing the Open Doors Sleep Center may increase the use of emergency services, as research indicates shelter closures typically lead to higher demands on law enforcement, emergency medical responders, and hospitals, resulting in increased public costs ([Annals of Emergency Medicine, NIH](#)). Without shelter access, individuals are more likely to remain in public spaces, and an increasing call for service.

Looking ahead, the City of Moses Lake remains dedicated to evaluating the impact and sustainability of affordable housing and continuing to discuss homelessness responsibly and strategically within the community. Engaging the community and guidance from elected officials will be crucial in determining the next steps for the City of Moses Lake.

CONCLUSION

Since its establishment, the Open Doors Sleep Center has operated as a low-barrier, emergency overnight shelter designed to provide immediate and accessible shelter options for individuals experiencing homelessness. The shelter has minimal entry requirements, offers essential services, and maintains operational accountability. Over the past four years, it has provided immediate shelter assistance to community members, addressing short-term housing needs.

The Multifamily Tax Exemption (MFTE) program supports housing development and affordability within Moses Lake by incentivizing private investment in multifamily housing. The program seeks to address local housing market demands and expand housing availability in designated areas of the city.

Potential future considerations include evaluating the geographic scope and effectiveness of the MFTE program in addressing local housing market conditions. Additionally, partnerships with local organizations such as Habitat for Humanity could be explored to assess practical opportunities for housing development, aligning with responsible land use and community priorities.

Further collaboration with entities such as the Ad Hoc Homeless Committee could support the development of structured plans with clear goals, measurable outcomes, and accountability frameworks. Such approaches aim to track effectiveness, efficiency, and impacts related to homelessness initiatives and community stability.

The information provided herein is intended to support informed decision-making by the City Council regarding the city's role and future direction in addressing housing availability and homelessness-related concerns.