



## FACT SHEET

### Low Barrier, Emergency Supportive Housing At Alameda Point January 31, 2022

#### The Need for Homeless Housing in Alameda

- The City of Alameda (City) lacks sufficient housing space for our unhoused residents, which currently include elderly and medically vulnerable individuals living without shelter in inclement weather.
- The last physical count of the homeless population conducted in January 2019 (during the coldest part of the year) revealed that there were 231 individuals without shelter in Alameda. Though unconfirmed, this number has likely increased over the last two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic and other factors. While any number of people living on the street or in their cars is too many, challenges related to homelessness are solvable with the right strategies. With fewer than 300 people experiencing homelessness on any given day, the scale of the problem presents an opportunity to make a meaningful impact on preventing and reducing homelessness in the community.
- On October 5, 2021, the Alameda City Council approved *The Road Home: A Five-Year Strategic Plan to Prevent and Respond to Homelessness in Alameda* (The Road Home). The Road Home incorporated community comments gathered over the course of eight months between 2020 and 2021, including two community webinars; community online surveys available in four languages and completed by 1,097 residents; 13 stakeholder interviews with representatives from City and County agencies and government, law enforcement officials, community-based organizations, service providers, and faith-based organizations; five Steering Committee meetings comprised of representatives from nonprofit agencies, faith-based organizations, City and County entities, law enforcement, the business community, and individuals with lived experience of

homelessness; and public presentations to the City Council, the Social Service Human Relations Board, and the Commission on Persons with Disabilities.

- The Road Home and its strategies incorporated discussion of using existing property owned by the City to develop housing for unhoused individuals. To view a copy of The Road Home, see <https://www.alamedaca.gov/RESIDENTS/Homelessness-Initiatives-and-Efforts/Homelessness-Strategic-Plan>

### **Opportunity to Develop Emergency Supportive Housing with Federal Funds**

- A timely opportunity has emerged to use three vacant, City-owned homes at Alameda Point in combination with funding available through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to provide emergency relief for unhoused individuals. While the amount of the funding is limited, it does offer enough to provide basic remodeling to convert existing homes into low barrier supportive emergency housing with shared bedrooms.
- Low barrier emergency supportive housing is designed to remove most requirements and obstacles for entry into the housing program, meaning that individuals are more likely go indoors and connect to services that can begin to address their individual challenges rather than staying on the street. For example, unhoused residents are allowed to bring their pets and possessions, to live with their partners, and do not have to exit the shelter each morning. Though residents are required to be respectful of the neighbors and the neighborhood, as well as other residents and staff, residents may come to the housing in need of treatment that they will then be connected with by those who staff the housing.
- At its July 20, 2021 meeting, the City Council discussed potential site options for temporary shelters, emergency supportive housing, transitional housing, and permanent housing. Funding and site availability were key in identifying locations that could move forward in a timely manner.
- At this time, an emergency supportive housing project is most feasible in three vacant Alameda Point homes – two of which are Big Whites and one of which is a townhome (collectively, Vacant Homes). The Vacant Homes were selected due to the ability to convert them quickly and with less expense than other options.
- The Vacant Homes are located at the following addresses:
  - 2845 Pearl Harbor Road,
  - 2815 Newport Road, and
  - 2700 Lemoore Road Unit A

- Other types of structures, such as vacant commercial buildings and barracks, will be more costly to convert to housing and will require more time to do the work, and therefore are not being considered for this emergency housing opportunity.

ARPA funding was awarded to the City in 2021 and received on June 17, 2021. Additional funding of \$14.34 million will be received in 2022. Eligible costs must be incurred or obligated to infrastructure projects by December 31, 2024, and the period of performance for obligated funds will run until December 31, 2026. These funds do not require review under the National Environmental Policy Act. The applicability of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to this project is described below. The City will not be required to make any specific improvements to the Vacant Homes as a result of using ARPA funding.

### **Emergency Supportive Housing at the Big Whites**

- The City selected the Vacant Homes because of the ability to convert these homes quickly and with less expense into emergency supportive housing.
- The emergency supportive housing at the Vacant Homes will do the following:
  - Provide unhoused individuals with a place to live;
  - Give priority for placement to unhoused residents of Alameda, the elderly and the medically vulnerable;
  - Provide supportive services designed to move participants out of the emergency supportive housing and into permanent housing, creating a pipeline for housing and a tool to end homelessness for program participants;
  - Provide supportive services that will work towards eliminating or minimizing barriers each individual is facing when searching for housing;
  - Provide accommodations for the pets of participants, including program support for their care. Pets must interact appropriately with participants, staff and other pets and must be kept in hygienic conditions;
  - Ensure programming, including occupancy of the bedrooms, meets current COVID safety guidance from Alameda County Health Care Services to the extent available; and
  - In some circumstances, provides transportation via car or shared ride to appointments, interviews, etc.
- The emergency supportive housing has been planned for Alameda’s homeless adults, the City’s highest need population. There is the potential to convert one of the homes for families, if needed.
- Concerns have been raised about the number of individuals in each home. The City must balance the need to provide emergency shelter—particularly for the

elderly and medically vulnerable who are currently living unsheltered—with the comfort level in the shelter provided. In addition, the City is trying to maximize the assistance it can provide to its unhoused community members, particularly during the coldest months.

- The City anticipates that most bedrooms would have two residents. Larger spaces such as converted living space may have additional beds. Most residents are likely to stay in the emergency supportive housing for about six months before being able to move to permanent housing.
- The emergency supportive housing at the Vacant Homes would be a temporary project anticipated to be in place for three to five years. The long-term future use of the Vacant Homes properties is still under consideration.
- For individuals renting from the City, please note that the City is not waiving or reducing rents, and rent payments will continue to be required, as described in your agreement with the City, for your housing. For information about rent requirements in Alameda visit: <https://www.alamedaca.gov/ALERTS-COVID-19/Tenant-Resources/Frequently-Asked-Questions-and-Answers-for-Alameda-Renters>
- The Alameda County Housing Secure Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ACHS-ERAP) is currently accepting applications. ACHS-ERAP will help income-eligible households pay rent and utilities, both for past due and future payments. The federal Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 provides funding to support the program. Tenants are encouraged to apply. Alternatively, landlords may choose to apply. For information about the ACHS-ERAP, its guidelines or application, please visit the website: [www.ac-housingsecure.org/](http://www.ac-housingsecure.org/)

### **Service Provider for the Emergency Housing**

- To develop these properties as quickly as feasible the City took the following measures:
  - Requested proposals from two service providers by invitation, in lieu of issuing a formal Request for Proposal (RFP), which can add several weeks or more to a project timeline; and
  - Brought the project to the City Council for approval as soon as the opportunity became known, while also making plans to meet with the community to work on the details of program implementation.
- To select the service provider, staff invited Bay Area Community Services (BACS) and Village of Love, to each submit a proposal. The two organizations were selected based on their depth of experience providing social services and emergency and transitional housing to the homeless. Both organizations

submitted a response and were interviewed. Staff found both to be capable of offering emergency housing, but recommended BACS based on its relevant experience and performance in the screening process.

## Background Checks

- Consistent with the low barrier approach, identification will not be required for participation in emergency supportive housing.
- Many unhoused individuals need support with obtaining identification. Program staff will provide assistance as part of the services to prepare individuals for permanent housing. It is uncommon for homeless individuals to use an alias or hide their identity. Most of the homeless population in Alameda are known and familiar to City personnel and service providers through the City's Coordinated Outreach Team. As noted, the local homeless population will be targeted for this housing program.
- The project will follow all legal requirements, including Megan's Law.

## Community Engagement

- The City held a community meeting on November 29, 2021 to discuss plans and seek programmatic input for low barrier emergency supportive housing at Alameda Point for homeless individuals. The meeting may be viewed on YouTube: [https://youtu.be/3t7\\_RhguPXQ](https://youtu.be/3t7_RhguPXQ)
- Comments or questions about the project may be submitted to the City at [www.AlamedaCa.gov/emergencyhousing](http://www.AlamedaCa.gov/emergencyhousing) or by email at: [acox@alamedaca.gov](mailto:acox@alamedaca.gov)
- We will continue to host community engagement sessions to work out emerging issues related to this project, and will continue to work with the neighborhood. To be on an email notification list for future community meetings, please email: [acox@alamedaca.gov](mailto:acox@alamedaca.gov)

## "Housing First" Model

- Low barrier emergency housing uses a "Housing First" model. Housing First is a well-accepted, national, evidenced-based best practice that eliminates barriers to housing, ensuring individuals and families can exit homelessness as quickly as possible. Housing First is an approach to quickly and successfully connect people experiencing homelessness to permanent housing without preconditions and barriers to entry, such as sobriety, treatment or service participation

requirements. Supportive services are offered to participants to maximize housing stability and prevent returns to homelessness as opposed to addressing predetermined treatment goals prior to permanent housing entry.

- Scattered site housing simply refers to housing a group of people in more than one building, which buildings are not connected to each other. For example, three separate family homes instead of one larger apartment building would be considered a scattered site project.

### **Ensuring Emergency Supportive Housing is a Good Neighbor**

- Community members have raised concerns about neighborhood impacts from this emergency supportive housing project. However, as individuals become stable in housing and receive support for mental health, substance abuse and other needs, the likelihood of problematic behavior should decrease. People living in the homeless encampments at and around Alameda Point would be included as potential participants in this housing program, enabling them to receive the supportive services to help address their concerns.
- The project's service provider will address community concerns regarding behavior in the following ways:
  - Providing on-site staff who are awake 24/7 at each of the three homes. A minimum of one staff per home will be on duty to address any issues that arise;
  - Maintaining a 24-hour telephone number that can be used by the community to report issues;
  - Maintaining a general no-visitor policy and only allowing authorized guests into the facility;
  - Providing written materials to the surrounding neighborhood that include instructions for contacting program staff to resolve issues that do not require emergency services;
  - Setting behavioral expectations for participants, including standards for their pets, and promptly addressing problems with the participant as needed;
  - Participating in community problem solving around issues that may arise;
  - Participating in Alameda's Coordinated Outreach team to share information and incorporate support from other agencies when needed; and
  - Reporting back to the City on how community concerns have been addressed.
- The Alameda Police Department participates in Alameda's Coordinated Outreach Team and will continue to work closely with this program.
- As a part of their program management, emergency housing staff will help participants to maintain their vehicles in working order. If you see abandoned

vehicles in your neighborhood, you can contact the non-emergency line of the police department at (510) 337-8340.

- The City’s contract with the service provider will include the stated expectation of minimizing and addressing impacts on the surrounding neighborhood, including behaviors which may occur outside of the immediate area around the emergency housing.

## Definition of Emergency Supportive Housing

- This project will convert the three Vacant Homes into low barrier emergency supportive housing. Emergency supportive housing is different than emergency shelter, as described in more detail below.
- The Planning Director of the City has determined that this project is not classified as an “emergency shelter” and is classified as “supportive housing” because the program includes extensive support services and does not impose a strict limit on length of stay. “Emergency shelters,” according to the Alameda Municipal Code (AMC), are “housing with minimal supportive services for homeless persons that is limited to occupancy of six (6) months or less by a homeless person.”
- This project will provide supportive services designed to move participants out of the emergency housing and into permanent housing, creating a pipeline for homeless housing and a tool to end homelessness for participants. Most residents are likely to stay in the emergency housing for about six months before being able to move to permanent housing.
- The proposed program falls within the definition of supportive housing because the program includes extensive support services and does not impose a strict limit on length of stay.

## Zoning

- The uses of the three Vacant Homes are governed by the AMC and the Main Street Specific Plan. The AMC and Main Street Specific Plan permit the use of these homes for single family and multifamily housing by right. (AMC § 30-4.24, Main Street Specific Plan, § 5.3.3, Table 5.1 (Permitted and Conditional Uses).)
- The use of these three Vacant Homes to provide housing and support services for the target populations is consistent with the permitted use of these lands. Accordingly, approval of a program to use the buildings for emergency or supportive housing is ministerial, and does not require any discretionary approvals under California law. See Gov. Code § 65583 [“Supportive housing . .



. shall be a use by right in all zones where multifamily and mixed uses are permitted....”].)

- The proposed program falls within the definition of “supportive housing” because the program includes extensive support services and does not impose a strict limit on length of stay. Furthermore, it is not classified as an “emergency shelter,” which is defined in AMC Section 30-2 as “housing with minimal supportive services for homeless persons that is limited to occupancy of six (6) months or less by a homeless person.”
- The use of common areas to convert to bedrooms, and provide additional sleeping areas is allowed. Nothing in the building code prohibits using a living area for a sleeping area.
- To view the AMC visit: <https://www.alamedaca.gov/GOVERNMENT/Key-City-Documents#section-4>
- To view the Main Street Specific Plan visit: [www.alamedaca.gov/files/assets/public/departments/alameda/ams\\_specificplan\\_040317.pdf](http://www.alamedaca.gov/files/assets/public/departments/alameda/ams_specificplan_040317.pdf)

## Lead Based Paint Abatement

- Lead-based paint was used in the interior and on the exterior of the two vacant Big Whites homes. The City encapsulated the homes to abate the threat of the lead-based paint when it accepted them in the Navy in 1998.
- The City has budgeted to do a lead paint monitoring, assessment, and remediation, as necessary, in all 19 of the Big Whites homes (including the two of the Vacant Homes that are Big Whites homes). One Big Whites home has been completed and 18 homes remain to be done. The City anticipates that interior and exterior remediation will be completed by the end of this fiscal year (June 30, 2022). In addition, there are plans to address dry rot in a portion of these homes.
- The vacant townhome does not have lead paint.

## CEQA

- This project qualifies for an exemption under CEQA. CEQA does not apply to actions approved by or carried out by the City in furtherance of providing emergency shelters, supportive housing, or affordable housing. See Gov. Code



§§ 8698.4(a)(4), 65583; Pub. Resources Code § 21080.60 as separate and independent bases.

- CEQA does not apply to a permitted use of existing buildings (CEQA Guidelines § 15301) and the proposed project is further exempt because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the project would have a significant effect on the environment (CEQA Guideline Section 15061(b)(3)).

### Historical Advisory Board

- This project will include primarily interior remodeling and repairs. There will not be significant modifications to the exterior of the building nor significant demolition or removal of any character defining features that would trigger a Certificate of Approval before the Historical Advisory Board (HAB). All work performed will be consistent with the NAS Historic District Guide to Preserving the Character of the Naval Air Station Alameda and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Therefore, the project is not anticipated to be subject to review by the HAB. The NAS Historic District Guide to Preserving the Character of the Naval Air Station Alameda can be viewed here:

[https://www.alamedaca.gov/files/assets/public/departments/alameda/base-reuse/previous-planning-docs/guide\\_to\\_district\\_part2.pdf](https://www.alamedaca.gov/files/assets/public/departments/alameda/base-reuse/previous-planning-docs/guide_to_district_part2.pdf)

- The City is not proposing that the Vacant Homes be “demolished, removed, or altered”. Per the AMC, “alteration” as it pertains to historic preservation is defined as follows:

*Alteration shall mean any addition, or exterior modification, improvement, repair, or replacement of character defining elements, which alter or change the original materials or appearance of a historical resource, including but not limited to, massing, roof forms, porches, finish materials, windows, and decorative details. The addition and alteration of awnings and signs, excluding historically designated signs, or interior modifications, improvements and repairs are not included in this definition.*

Any Building Permit application which involves exterior changes, any demolition or removal of any character defining feature or changes representing 30% or more of the value of the building as determined by the Building Official will be reviewed by Planning Division staff for consistency with Design Review and Historical Preservation requirements. As part of the review process, the Building Official will confirm whether the project meets the definition of a demolition, which would require a Certificate of Approval from the Historical Advisory Board.

## Affordable Housing Requirements

- Converting the Vacant Homes to emergency supportive housing to accommodate the unhoused does not remove designated affordable housing.
- The Vacant Homes are not part of the City's affordable housing inventory. The homes are not deed restricted properties intended for occupancy by lower income households.
- Separate efforts are underway to increase the inventory of affordable housing in Alameda including at Alameda Point 'Site A,' which includes 72 units affordable to moderate income households and 128 units for very low- income households; Corsair Flats, which includes 59 unit for low-income seniors and veterans; and The Starling, which includes 69 affordable units.
- There are no plans for all newly vacant housing at Alameda Point to be converted to homeless housing, but the City currently requires that newly constructed market rate housing must include affordable housing for 25% of their units.
- These three Vacant Homes were not available for rental at the time this project was approved and were not creating City income. The City has prioritized the need to house unhoused individuals, and recognizes that this priority has associated costs, including potential loss of income. The City also believes this homeless housing priority has associated benefits that advance City Council and community goals.