



DANE COUNTY

Joe Parisi
County Executive

February 24, 2016

To: Dane County Board of Supervisors
From: County Executive Joe Parisi
Re: County Day Resource Center Efforts

Dane County has been working with community partners, including the City of Madison and The United Way, to find a suitable site for a day resource center for several years.

The county's recent acquisition of the former Messner location at 1326 East Washington Avenue in the City of Madison provides the best chance to date for making the vision of a centrally located, one-stop-shop connection to housing, basic needs, and other community resources a reality – a safe place that will not only provide shelter from the winter cold and summer heat, but a path to permanent housing.

Past Efforts to Provide Basic Day Shelter

The need for a facility for individuals who are without shelter during the day became apparent in the winter of 2011-2012 due to a number of community changes. At that time, locations that individuals had traditionally used to seek shelter during the day were closed to the public – the Madison Central Library was undergoing extensive renovations, and the state permanently closed the Capitol Building's basement cafeteria.

In response, a temporary warming shelter was opened from November of 2011 to March of 2012 at the vacant former Don Miller site on East Washington Ave. Operated by Porchlight, the space offered shelter and safety from the elements for many.

As the winter of 2012 – 2013 approached, the need for a daytime warming space remained, and the county stepped up to fund an interim winter shelter. Finding a suitable site was difficult due to community concern. After exploring several properties, the county was able to rent a vacant site from the Goodman Center on East Washington Avenue next to The Rainbow Project.

This location was also controversial, but the county was able to move forward by promising that the county would only operate at that location for the winter and no longer.

This temporary warming shelter opened on November 27th of 2012, and closed at the end of March in 2013. It was operated by Shine 608 and was largely considered a success, serving approximately 125 people per day.

While these facilities met a critical basic need – providing shelter from the winter – they were not the vision for what is currently referred to as a “day resource center,” a facility that our community has identified as a needed resource, and that the county and its partners have worked actively to open since 2013.

Recent Efforts to Open a Day Resource Center

Since the winter of 2013, the need for a permanent day resource center – a place that provides for basic needs, but also, critically, a path to permanent housing and other community resources – became a county goal. A series of resolutions were adopted by County government to address areas of housing and homelessness, including:

- A resolution to provide funds to secure a permanent site for a day resource center, so long as the City of Madison and/or other non-profit agencies shared the total operating expenses.
- A resolution recognizing housing as a human right.
- A resolution creating a County Homeless Issues Committee (now a joint City-County Homeless Issues Committee).
- A request that the Department of Human Services, with the approval of the Homeless Issues Committee, develop a report on operational and site recommendations for a permanent day resource center.

A report on recommendations for a permanent day resource center was approved by the County Homeless Issues Committee and issued on February 1, 2013. The report has been a blueprint for the county's work since that time (please see attachment). Recommendations included guidance on the ideal square footage for a facility (4 – 8,000 square feet minimum) and location (central/isthmus location, near a bike path and major bus route, with proximity to compatible services).

The county pursued a number of sites identified by the county's real estate department, and through tips from the community, without progress. Either the sites were not suitable based on the report recommendations, or the seller would not talk to the county or consider negotiations with the county.

One of the earliest options reviewed was a facility on Wright Street.

The county then issued two requests for proposals (RFP) in an effort to secure additional site options. One was issued in June of 2013 and received two responses that did not meet the RFP criteria. A second RFP was issued in August of 2013 with expanded criteria for location and received one response – the MARC building on Lien Rd. in Madison.

Ultimately, the county could not move forward on this location due to issues of timeline and site availability. Subsequently, the county has learned that the MARC site used to be a dry cleaning operation, and is in need of extensive environmental remediation.

The option to purchase the site that is currently home to Hospitality House, operated by Porchlight at 1490 Martin St. in the Town of Madison, emerged. This location was deemed suitable due to its history as an established day shelter. The county entered into an accepted offer to purchase the site in March of 2014, contingent on a site and building plan approval by the Town of Madison.

The county worked diligently in 2014 and 2015 to secure the approvals necessary to renovate and open a day resource center but was unable to obtain the agreement of the neighborhood and the Town of Madison government.

Ultimately, the dispute ended up in the Wisconsin court system, and the prospect of opening a day resource center at 1490 Martin St. dimmed. Additionally, Shine 608, which had responded to a county RFP for operations of a day resource center in 2013, withdrew their proposal due to the prolonged siting process.

The county reached out to its partners, the City of Madison and The United Way, to renew efforts to find a central location for a day resource center. The County Board passed a resolution in the summer of 2015 authorizing additional capital dollars to purchase a site, opening up more options for purchase in downtown Madison. The county and its partners explored the Bellini Restaurant site, but there were challenges with the facility's size, condition, and configuration that ultimately did not make it suitable.

The former Messner building on East Washington Avenue then became available. After touring the facility, the county believed the site met multiple recommended criteria for a day resource center, and negotiated an accepted offer to purchase the site. The building was extremely desirable to other buyers, and the county would have lost another opportunity to open a day resource center had it not moved to purchase the property immediately.

Current Status

The county now owns the Messner property and has been working with the City of Madison and The United Way to engage the community in discussions of the plans for the site.

The county issued an RFP for a site architect in October of 2015 and awarded a contract to Dorschner Associates, Inc. The firm has been working on proposed site plans and design based on the 2013 recommendations report approved by the Homeless Issues Committee.

The county also issued an RFP in October of 2015 for an operator of the day resource center. The county received one proposal that did not meet the criteria of the RFP.

After this RFP response, and after strong direction from the City of Madison that any conditional use permit (CUP) application for a day resource center include a selected operator, the county is currently working with The City of Madison and The United Way to determine an appropriate operations model based on previous recommendations and consideration of initial feedback from the Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood, elected officials, providers, and local advocates. An operator will be determined prior to proceeding with the CUP process to ensure open lines of communication within the Tenney-Lapham neighborhood. County managers and staff have met on a number of occasions with representatives of the Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Association to share information, answer questions, and hear neighborhood concerns. The county has placed great priority on wanting to address neighborhood concerns to the greatest extent possible.

Additional research, beyond what was presented in the initial day resource center report from 2013, into other day resource center models has been conducted by staff to help inform this process (attached). Once complete, additional feedback will be collected from concerned stakeholders through a public process, and be used in future steps to secure an operator. I hope this inclusive process can help mediate up front concerns that have hampered previous efforts.

Contingency Services

It is important to note that during the search for a day resource center site, the county, City of Madison, and The United Way have partnered to fund a number of interim services to provide basic needs for individuals who are homeless and in need of these services during the day.

Services provided include day shelter both at Hospitality House and Bethel Church, case management at the Madison Central Library, storage, portable toilets, laundry, van transportation, and the renovation of a shower at the Catholic Multicultural Center.

The attached brochure, developed by the Department of Human Services, outlines these contingency services and offers information about additional resources for individuals who are homeless that may or may not be funded by the county and its partners.

Other Community Efforts

The day resource center is just one piece of a larger, community-wide effort currently underway to end homelessness for more people and move them into safe, permanent housing.

More is known today about best practices other communities have used to end homelessness, and that knowledge is being applied to new and existing efforts to more efficiently deliver services to those in need.

The county is partnering with the City of Madison to create more units of permanent supportive housing to end homelessness for single adults and families.

The City of Madison has made a commitment to create a total of 250 units of permanent supportive housing for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. In 2015, the county created the \$8 million Affordable Housing Development Fund – \$2 million a year for the next four years for projects focused on increasing affordable housing for those who need it most.

In the spring of 2016, 60 units of permanent supportive housing with intensive, on-site support services will open on Madison's east side on Rethke Avenue. These units will be available to single adults who are chronically homeless (35 units) and veterans who are homeless (25 units). County funds were used to help purchase the housing site, and construct a portion of the building.

The county is also partnering with the city to create 45 units of permanent supportive housing for families experiencing homelessness on Madison's West Side on Tree Lane. As in the Rethke development, county funds were used to help purchase the housing site, and construct a portion of the building. This project is currently in development, and if necessary tax credits are obtained, could be open for tenants in late 2017.

The county is also a partner with the City of Madison, service providers, and advocates in the community-wide Zero: 2016 effort to end homelessness. Zero: 2016 is a federal Housing and Urban Development program with the goal of ending homelessness for veterans in 2016, and for individuals who are chronically homeless in 2017.

Additionally, the county's network of homeless and housing service providers have been working together to implement a coordinated entry system aimed at making access to their programs easier and more efficient,

as well as adopting program changes such as “Housing First” to eliminate barriers for individuals and families in need of housing or shelter.

This housing first philosophy – where no conditions need to be met in order for an individual to access housing – has been key in other communities across the nation that have been able to reduce homelessness, and help people who enter permanent supportive housing access other services, if they choose to do so.

Cc: Madison Mayor Paul Soglin

Madison City Council

United Way of Dane County

Lynn Green, Director of Human Services

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