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Fremont Announces Opening of Housing Navigation Center for Homeless Individuals

Fremont, Calif. – August 31, 2020 – The City of Fremont today announced the opening of its Housing Navigation Center (HNC). The new Center is another pivotal move in addressing the City’s homeless crisis by providing unhoused community members with shelter and a path to securing permanent housing. The HNC is expected to begin housing residents in September 2020 for up to six months and operate for three years, with an option for five, based on funding secured for the initiative. The City projects a total of \$9.47 million in HNC funding from state, county, and City-led programs to run the Center for the first three years. Beyond 2023, the City will evaluate the program to further extend the operation for additional years, contingent upon future funding opportunities.

Please join the City of Fremont online at www.Fremont.gov/HNCOpenhouse this evening, at 6 p.m. for the Housing Navigation Center Virtual Open House/Grand Opening event. The event will include formal remarks, a photo montage of the project, and a virtual tour of the facility.

“No one person should have to go without basic needs, and with hundreds of our community members unhoused, the City of Fremont has made it a high priority to help these individuals with essential resources through programs like this Center,” said Fremont Mayor Lily Mei. “Our Housing Navigation Center is a critical component of our larger plan to minimize homelessness in Fremont. As a result of our February 2019 Point-in-Time survey we recognize homelessness in Fremont is increasing. Coupled with the challenges that have directly impacted our community related to COVID-19, we are more determined than ever to see the HNC and future efforts to combat homelessness succeed.”

Last summer, the City conducted the largest civic engagement effort in its history by hosting public workshops and a launching a community-wide survey, receiving input from thousands of Fremont residents and businesses that ultimately helped shape the new Housing Navigation Center. Construction of the HNC started in February and remained a top priority during COVID-19. The Fremont City Council held a Special Meeting on September 10, 2019, and unanimously approved locating the Center behind Fremont City Hall. The Mayor and Councilmembers selected the City Hall site based on its proximity to services, food access, and transportation. Approximate construction costs totaled \$2.84 million.

A Center for Impacting Lives

Modeled after the City of Berkeley STAIR Center, the HNC acts as a clean, safe, calm, and flexible environment that enables homeless persons to rebuild their lives and intensely focus on finding stable,

permanent housing. In an effort to comply with COVID-19 safety measures, a reduced number of 25 participants will be accepted into the center after outreach and intake, and are anticipated to stay six months or less, before finding a permanent placement. The facility has been constructed to house 45 participants and will house more residents, after the pandemic ends.

[Bay Area Community Service](#) (BACS) was selected to be the operator of Fremont's HNC. The organization is also the operator of the Berkeley Stair Center, Oakland's two Navigation Centers, and Hayward's Navigation Center. With extensive experience in providing navigation services for persons experiencing homelessness, BACS will utilize an initial budget of \$1,824,020 to replicate existing City services and continue to ramp up Fremont's HNC operations. Further budget approximations for FY 2021/22 and FY 2022/23 have been finalized as well.

Tackling a Growing Homeless Population

Homelessness in Fremont has risen 27% from 2017 to 2019, according to the annual [Alameda County Point-in-Time Count & Survey](#). The same survey found that 485 of the 608 homeless participants were unsheltered. Currently, in Alameda County, for every homeless person who finds permanent housing three more individuals are becoming unhoused. With homelessness continuing to rise throughout the county, Fremont remains focused on addressing this growing issue, which continues to be a top priority for the Fremont City Council. It is through sustainable solutions, like the HNC, that Fremont is tackling homelessness.

The HNC is a concrete step in the City's vision to significantly reduce homelessness within the community. A number of leading, innovative programs and initiatives, driven by the City's Human Services Department, are already underway, including:

- Hired Fremont's first-ever Homeless Services Manager in June 2020
- [Winter Shelter](#)
- [Mobile Shower and Laundry Unit](#)
- [A list of shelters, food sources, and supplies](#)
- [Family Resource Center](#)

A breakdown of total funding for the HNC includes: \$1.47 million from Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP); \$100,000 from California Emergency Solution and Housing (CESH); up to \$1.76 million from the Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) Program; \$1.93 million in Permanent Local Housing Allocation (PLHA) authorized by the Building Homes and Jobs Act (SB2, 2017); \$3.24 million in City funds from the unspent portion of the one-time homeless General Fund dollars appropriated by the City Council in FY 2017/18, as well as the unallocated balance in the City-Funded Affordable Housing Fund; \$320,000 annually from the Alameda County Social Services Agency; and \$31,000 from community contributions.

For more information on the Fremont Housing Navigation Center, please visit www.Fremont.gov/NavigationCenter. A video tour of the facility will be available beginning at 6 p.m. on August 31 at www.Fremont.gov/HNCopenhouse.

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