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# Clean Slate Town Halls: Shelter Basics and Criteria

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Friday, June 2, 5:30 to 8:30pm

Saturday, June 3, 1 to 4pm

Monday, June 5, 5:30 to 8:30pm

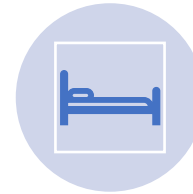
# Agenda



Lay of the Land



Shelter Best Practices



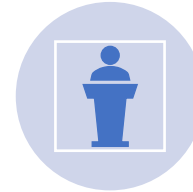
Shelter Licensing



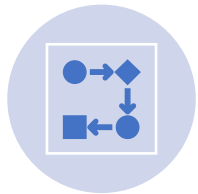
Examples of Well-Run Shelter



Review of Past Shelter Criteria



Public Participation / Q&A



Next Steps in the Process

# Lay of the Land, Pre-COVID

- MOA Role: Extremely limited. Provide emergency cold weather shelter per AMC 16.120 requirements typically at Bean's Cafe at ~100 people or so and set up warming station at Downtown Transit Center.
- The first time funding was provided to assist with year-round shelter was in 2019.
- Brother Francis Shelter was at 240+ people.
- January PIT Count 2015: 179 unsheltered, 1,029 sheltered, 1,208 total
- January PIT Count 2019: 97 unsheltered, 1,014 sheltered, 1,111 total





# Lay of the Land, COVID-19

- MOA Role: Expanded exponentially. Stood up COVID-19 Mass Care Sites. Sullivan Arena. Multiple non-congregate sites at hotels. Because of these sites, we didn't need to stand up emergency cold weather shelter.
- Alcohol tax began impacting the system in 2021.
- Most shelters reduced their census to meet the CDC guidelines for distancing. Brother Francis Shelter went from 240+ down to ~75.
- January 2021 PIT Count: 152 unsheltered, 1,167 sheltered, 1,319 total



# Lay of the Land, Current

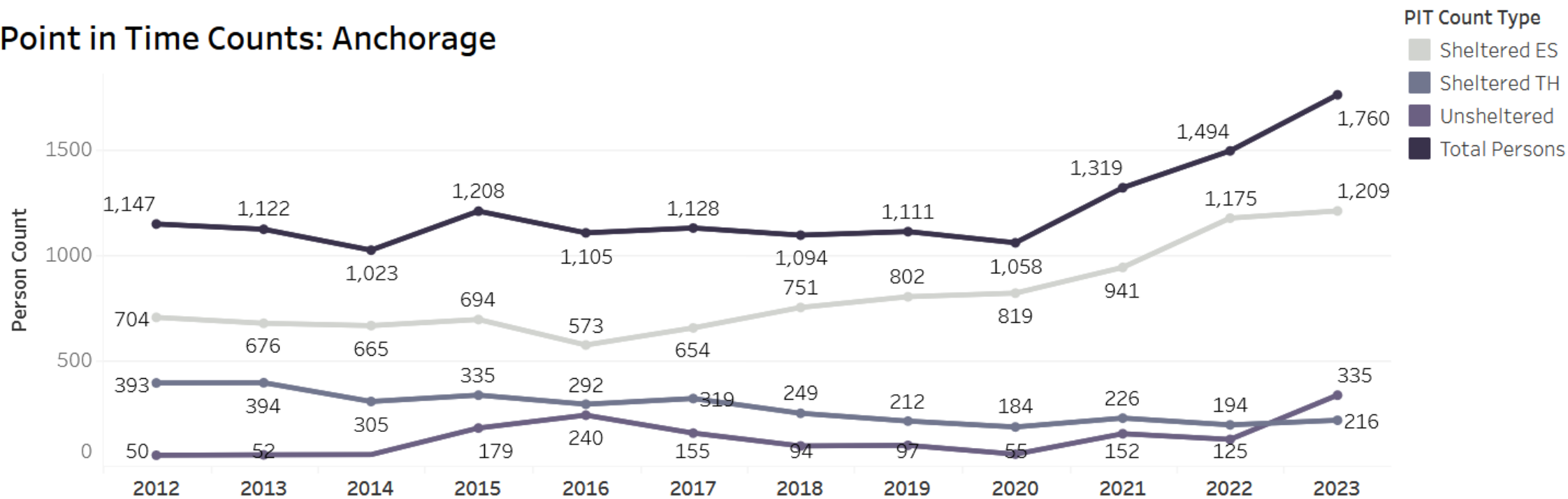
- MOA Role: No more COVID-19 mass care sites. Sullivan Arena open, shut, opened again, shut again. Emergency cold weather shelter beefed up drastically to meet the need.
- \$11.8M spent during the 2022-2023 winter. Alcohol tax heavily relied on to pay for these needs. Other priorities for alcohol tax are going to reduce our ability to rely on it for ECWS into the future.
- Most shelters go back to a realistic census that matches their staffing. Brother Francis Shelter goes from ~75 to 120.
- January 2022 PIT Count: 125 unsheltered, 1,369 sheltered, 1,494 total
- January 2023 PIT Count: 335 unsheltered, 1,425 sheltered, 1,760 total




# Lay of the Land, Year over Year



## Point in Time Counts: Anchorage





An aerial photograph of a city, likely Denver, Colorado, showing a dense urban area with various high-rise buildings and a large green field in the foreground. In the background, there are prominent mountains under a blue sky with light clouds. The image is partially obscured by a white curved shape on the right side.

# Lay of the Land, References

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- ACEH Website: <https://aceh.org/>
- Assembly's Homelessness Focus Website:  
<https://www.muni.org/Departments/Assembly/Pages/FOCUS-Homelessness.aspx>
- Assembly's Housing Focus Website:  
<https://www.muni.org/Departments/Assembly/Pages/FOCUS-Housing.aspx>



# Five Keys

TO **EFFECTIVE** EMERGENCY SHELTERS

Safety for the People Experiencing Homelessness  
= **Safety for the Neighborhood**



“Shelter should be a place you  
can imagine *yourself* going to  
if you need it.”



ONE

# Housing First Approach:

Align shelter eligibility criteria, policies, and practices with a housing first approach so that anyone experiencing homelessness can access shelter without prerequisites, make services voluntary, and assist people to access permanent housing options as quickly as possible.

An end to homelessness requires the **prevention of homelessness** whenever possible, **identification of and engagement** with people experiencing unsheltered homelessness or living in encampments to connect them to crisis services, as well as **pathways back to safe living arrangements or directly into housing** for people in emergency shelter, as well as for people who never enter emergency shelter.

To align a system that uses a Housing First approach, anyone experiencing homelessness should be able to enter shelter or any permanent housing intervention without prerequisites and services should be focused entirely on reconnecting people to housing as quickly as possible or stabilizing them in housing.

Emergency shelter should support **flow** from a housing crisis to housing stability, in which the aim of the system is to produce the most rapid and effective permanent housing connections for individuals and families facing crises.

TWO



Safe &

Appropriate

Diversion:

Provide diversion services to find safe and appropriate housing alternatives to entering shelter through problem-solving conversations, identifying and community supports, and offering lighter touch solutions.

Emergency shelters should be reserved for providing temporary housing for people facing crises who are seeking safety and/or have nowhere else to go. A growing number of communities are using targeted diversion strategies to decrease entries into homelessness and to quickly connect people who may be facing a housing crisis with a viable housing option *before* entering into emergency shelter. Effective diversion employs motivational interviewing strategies that focus on strengths and existing connections. If diversion is unsuccessful, these strategies can continue to be employed to connect people back to safe options quickly when possible.

**Determining Other Viable Options.** Diversion is a strategy that keeps people from entering emergency shelter, when possible, by helping them immediately identify alternate, safe housing arrangements (e.g., moving into a shared living arrangement with family members) and, if necessary, connecting them with services and financial assistance to help them return to permanent housing. Communities that are effectively employing diversion are often doing so with flexible financial assistance that allows them to quickly support pathways out of housing crises.

Some communities build diversion strategies into their coordinated entry processes as well as shelter intake procedures. Staff and volunteers are trained to emphasize the goal of helping people seeking shelter to find viable and safe housing options. Sometimes shelter diversion involves providing mediation and problem-solving support to determine if going back home is a safe alternative to emergency shelter entry. Other communities are proactively engaging people who have exited shelter and may be facing another housing crisis, offering targeted support and assistance before the crisis escalates to homelessness.





# THREE Immediate & Low-barrier Access:

Ensure immediate and easy access to shelter by lowering barriers to entry and staying open 24/7. Eliminate policies that make it difficult to enter shelter, stay in shelter, or access housing and income opportunities.

Create a more welcoming entry into shelter while still maintaining safety for participants and staff.

- Re-design the entry and security process to be more welcoming while prioritizing safety.
- Staff should greet participants as they enter instead of having participants being first greeted by security guards and metal detectors. This can create an institutional and punitive atmosphere and often creates more of a feeling of anxiety and an unhelpful power dynamic between staff and participants, rather than creating a safer environment. Staff can be trained on how to provide client safety services and security searches upon entry in a more respectful manner.
- If a shelter chooses to implement metal detectors or search of belongings, this should happen with the provision of amnesty totes. Otherwise, or in addition, use safety officers that are a trained part of the staff and understand the mission of the organization to end homelessness rather than traditional contracted security guards.
- The intention of safety officers is to have presence and circulate regularly throughout the facility while using engagement and non-violent de-escalation to deal with any issues as they come up.
- Safety officers are present to promote peace and safety, not to police the activity of shelter participants.

Eliminate shelter entry rules not necessary for the safety of residents and staff and have transparent behavioral expectations.

- Focus on behaviors and safety of shelter participants.
- It is fair, reasonable, and appropriate for the ARCH to have policies and procedures that inform service users that they cannot take weapons, alcohol or drugs into the building, and must turn over prescription medications for safe storage when in the shelter and receiving services.





# Housing- focused, Rapid Exit Services:

Focus services in shelters on assisting people in accessing permanent housing options as quickly as possible.

**The determined goal of shelter should be clear and guide the design of how it operates and how services are delivered.** A shelter will produce the outcomes for which it is designed. Ideally, emergency shelters should be a part of a crisis response system's process for getting someone housed as quickly as possible, not serve as a destination or as a solution for homelessness.

Shelters can serve various purposes. One type of shelter may have the goal of managing homelessness. This type of shelter provides temporary shelter and meets basic needs for individuals and/or families. A shelter designed to meet this goal provides a place to sleep for the night, provides basic needs such as showers and bathrooms, laundry, and mail services, as well as self-directed resources, information, and referrals. This is the current model of Emergency Cold Weather Shelter for single adults in Anchorage.

A shelter designed to end homelessness has as its goal the permanent resolution of a household's housing crisis. Shelter services are designed to assist in facilitating self-resolution, re-house households quickly, and reduce unsheltered homelessness. Shelters designed to achieve these goals do so by creating increased flow in the system by housing people more quickly, connecting households to coordinated entry, and connecting households to housing search and other resources to help them stabilize once housed.





FIVE

# Data To Measure Performance:

Measure data on the percentage of exit to housing, the average length of stay in a shelter, and returns to homelessness to evaluate the effectiveness of shelter and improve outcomes.

Key performance measures to evaluate the effectiveness of shelter and the shelter system include:

- Increased exits to permanent housing
- Decreased length of stay in shelter
- Reduction in returns to homelessness

In addition to the above key performance measures, all shelters within the system should track monthly performance measures including:

- Total number of beds (i.e. unaccompanied individuals and/or families)
- Total unique households served
- Total households entering shelter
- Total households exiting
- Total households exiting to permanent housing
- Average length of shelter stay in days for all households exiting the shelter to any destination
- Average length of shelter stay in days for all households exiting to a permanent housing destination
- Total household stayers (those households who entered in previous months and did not exit this month)

Performance should be monitored regularly because shelter performance impacts the entire crisis response system. It is important that the data and narrative of operations and service delivery match as data illustrates need, capacity, local coordination, and the strategies taken to end homelessness. Ensuring performance data is used for strategic decision making ensures improved system performance and more participants served with best practices.

# Shelter Licensing

- Why create shelter licensing?
- Needed a quality assurance tool.
- Not meant to be burdensome or costly for shelters.

# Shelter Licensing, Purpose and Intent

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## 16.125.001 - Purpose and intent.



The purpose of this chapter is to establish minimum standards of care and operation for homeless shelters in the municipality, enable and maintain data collection and monitoring of the homeless population, to maintain appropriate oversight in order to provide individuals and families experiencing homelessness with the care and services needed, and mitigate impacts of neighboring residents, businesses, property owners and the users of the shelters. The requirements of this chapter are not intended to be overly burdensome on homeless shelter operators. The intent of the assembly is to permit homeless and transient shelters to locate and operate with as much autonomy as is reasonably allowable. This chapter is intended to specifically detail the Municipality's commitments to the success of shelter operations.

(AO No. [2021-55\(S-1\)](#), § 1, 6-22-21)



# Shelter Licensing, Neighborhood Protections

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- C. The director or the assembly may impose conditions or restrictions on a license issued under this chapter in addition to those in this chapter should they find that it is in the interests of the public to do so.
  
- 11. A copy of a good neighbor policy that details the applicant's plan for community communication, minimizing neighborhood impacts, including policing of trash and loitering on or near the premises.

# Shelter Licensing, Neighborhood Protections

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4. A policy and procedure for ensuring the safety of clients, staff, volunteers and visitors. The procedures may include performing a criminal background checks, having codes of conduct and plans for staff, volunteer and visitor supervision.
5. Policies and practices that deter and reduce client loitering and prohibited camping in parks and public spaces and other impacts on neighboring residents, businesses, and property owners.

# Shelter Licensing, Neighborhood Protections

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## 16.125.065 - Minimizing neighborhood impacts.



### A. *Shelter commitment.*

1. Each shelter shall have a "Good Neighbor Policy" that outlines its commitment and policies to reduce impacts on surrounding areas by its operations, loitering of its clients, trash and litter, and other activities.

### B. *Municipality of Anchorage Commitment.*

1. No tolerance for unlawful loitering, soliciting in streets or roadways, or unauthorized camping within one-quarter mile of a licensed overnight or day shelter. Municipal law and code enforcement shall support this commitment as resources allow, subject to federal, state and local law.
2. Resources and technical assistance may be provided by the municipality based on location and site-specific needs.

(AO No. [2021-55\(S-1\)](#), § 1, 6-22-21)

# Shelter Licensing, Neighborhood Protections

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## 16.125.090 - Enforcement.



- A. *Inspections.* The director or designee shall have the authority, upon showing proper credentials and at reasonable times, to enter upon any and all parts of the premises in a homeless or transient shelter to examine and investigate its sanitary condition and to determine whether any provisions of this chapter are being violated. Refusal to allow inspections may be grounds for license suspension.
- B. *Compliance notice; plan of improvement.*
1. If the department has reasonable cause to believe that a violation of an applicable provision of this chapter, statute or regulation has occurred, the department shall provide a compliance notice to the licensee of the violation(s) and an opportunity to cure the violation within a reasonable time specified by the department. The notice must include a description of the violation(s), statement that the licensee may submit a written response to the report, any department requirement that the licensee submit a written response to the report, a description of any subsequent enforcement action the department intends to take. The compliance notice may require the licensee to be subject to a plan of improvement.
  2. If the department requires the licensee to be subject to a plan of improvement, the licensee shall submit a plan for corrective actions to the department within the time specified in the compliance notice. The department may accept the corrective action plan and inspect the shelter to verify the violations have been cured, or may serve the licensee with a plan of improvement describing the corrective actions the licensee is required to take, changes to its policies and procedures, and other requirements of the licensee to satisfy the plan. The licensee shall cooperate with the department for follow up inspections and plan requirements. The department may release the licensee from a plan of improvement upon satisfactory completion of its requirements and curing the violations in the compliance notice. The department may, at any time, for violations identified on a compliance notice or during the course of oversight under a plan of improvement, issue a notice of violation, or commence a license suspension or revocation action. The licensee may appeal to the director in writing to be released from a plan of improvement, such appeal hearing before the director shall be conducted under [chapter 3.60](#).
- C. *Notice of violation.* If it is determined at any time that the requirements of this chapter have been violated, the department shall notify the licensee of the violations by means of an inspection report form or other written notice. This written notice shall set forth the specific violations, establish a reasonable period of time for correction of the violations and state that failure to comply with any notice issued in conformance with the provisions of this chapter will subject the licensee to fines, and that repeated violations may result in suspension or revocation of the license. Violations of the provisions of this chapter subject the violator to a civil penalty as set forth in [section 14.60.030](#), or, if no penalty is included in [section 14.60.030](#), a civil fine not to exceed \$300.00. Appeals of a notice of violation imposing fines are made to the administrative hearing officer. At any time the department may suspend the fines, and offer a plan of improvement to the licensee.



# Shelter Licensing, Current State

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- Went into effect January 1, 2023
- Provisional licenses
- Largely not implemented



# Examples of Well-Run Shelter

Shelters can help areas where homelessness has been a problem.

Shelters of all sizes can operate with no negative impact on the surrounding neighborhood.

Here are four examples.

Prepared by John Weddleton 907-770-0685 5/22/23

# Pine Street Inn – Boston

- With a mission to end homelessness, Pine Street Inn is New England's leading provider of housing, shelter, street outreach and job training to homeless men and women in Greater Boston. [www.pinestreetinn.org](http://www.pinestreetinn.org)
- Their main facility is an old fire station but they have expanded to others. The Pine Street Inn has over 500 residents. It is a low barrier shelter but also has some rooms for longer stays and people who end up working there.
- There is no way to know it's a shelter except for the sign. They have close relationships with surrounding businesses and will address issues even if they are not from their residents.





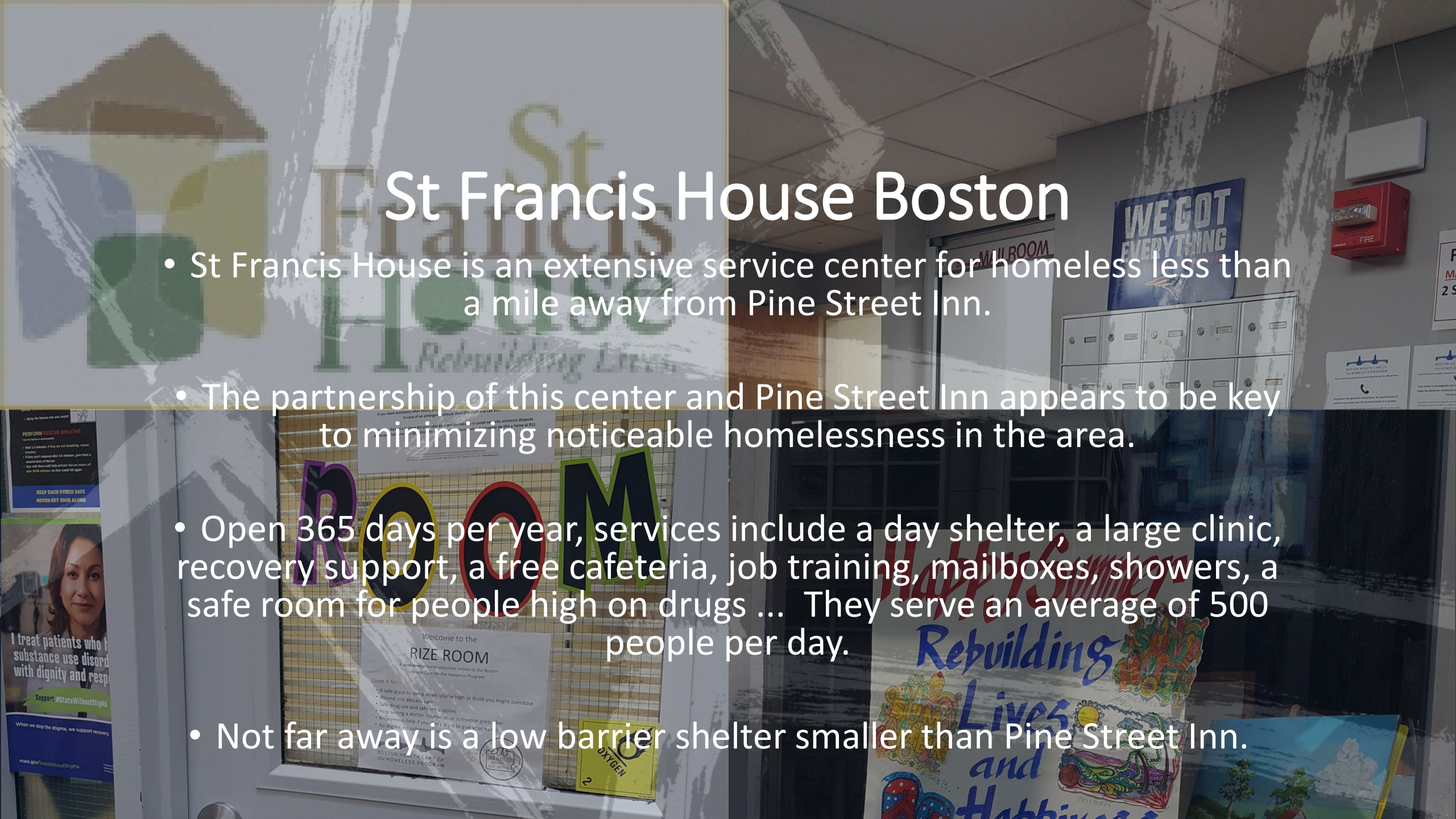
# Pine Street Inn – Boston

- The shelter is mostly men with 100 or so women who are in a separate part of the building and with a separate entrance.
- There are armed guards present.
- Across the street is a new high-end high-rise condo development.



# St Francis House Boston

- St Francis House is an extensive service center for homeless less than a mile away from Pine Street Inn.
- The partnership of this center and Pine Street Inn appears to be key to minimizing noticeable homelessness in the area.
- Open 365 days per year, services include a day shelter, a large clinic, recovery support, a free cafeteria, job training, mailboxes, showers, a safe room for people high on drugs ... They serve an average of 500 people per day.
- Not far away is a low barrier shelter smaller than Pine Street Inn.





# Open Door Mission - Omaha

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- Open Door Mission provides 917 shelter beds. They require residents to be sober and off drugs. It is not just congregate shelter, it is a campus with an array of services and activities and apartment housing for clients recovering and transitioning.
- Open Door has a store where low income people can shop where everything is free, they can also work there to learn how to work. There is an extensive garden and 17,000 sq ft greenhouse for residents.
- The operation includes a facility for women and families and a special unit for veterans.





# Siena Francis House - Omaha

- Like Open Door, Siena Francis House is a campus providing a broad array of services including low barrier shelter for men and women, food, clothing and other emergency services 24/7, 365 days a year. Average nightly use is 374 people.

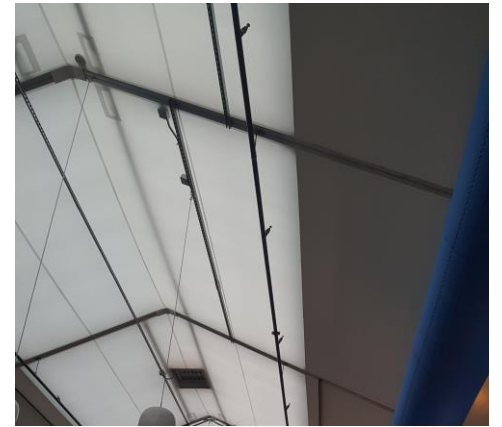


- Siena Francis House provides on-site, Permanent Supportive Housing, residential addiction rehabilitation services and facility space for partnering organizations that provide housing resources, medical and mental healthcare and other services.

- They also provide storage and showers for homeless who are not residents of the campus.



# Schrader House Hollywood, CA



- This low barrier shelter was opened in 2019 with 72 beds for men and women.

- The shelter was accompanied by a commitment to ban camping on the streets and sidewalks in the area.

- Basic services are provided. There is an area for pets.



# Promote Dignity and Respect

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- Consistently implement practices to meet people where they are and provide person-centered care that focuses on personal strengths.
- Convey clear expectations that shelter guests will be treated with dignity and respect, and monitor adherence to these expectations.
- Expectations of shelter guests are clearly communicated and easily accessible for review by guests.
- Practices that help ensure that the shelter exhibits cultural competency and provides appropriate protections for shelter seekers across demographic differences.
- Involve shelter guests in governance and operations.

# Adopt a Housing First Approach and Create Low-Barrier Access to Emergency Shelter

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- Address compliance to rules or case plans.
- Welcome self-defined family and kinship groups that seek shelter together.
- Accommodate pets and belongings (if possible).
- Shelter intake process and housing navigation services coordinate closely with community-based outreach services and coordinated entry.
- Flexible and predictable access for people seeking shelter.



# Use Emergency Shelter Stays as a Platform for Housing Access

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- Provide immediate assistance and link guests with housing options.
- Use data routinely to detect trends, identify frequent users, and monitor housing success and other performance measures.
- Provide population-specific supports, as appropriate, and promote safety while reducing risk for all shelter guests.
- Assess and address the safety risks for people fleeing domestic violence.



# Review of Past Criteria, Facilitated Collaborative Process Initial Screening

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- Availability
- Utilities
- Ability to configure for congregate care
- Avoid areas with high density of other operations
- Avoid conflicting with adjacent uses
- Building condition
- Not in Downtown or Fairview

# Review of Past Criteria, Facilitated Collaborative Process Next Level Criteria

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- Capital cost
- Operating cost,
- Cost per client
- Proximity to people experiencing homelessness
- Proximity to medical/healthcare
- Proximity to police
- Proximity to personal supports
- Space for services (minimum 15k sq ft)
- Proximity to transportation
- Safe ingress/egress
- Major Road traffic
- Space for services
- Exterior recreation space
- Daytime activity
- Accommodate couples
- Accommodate pets
- Ability for surge capacity
- Buffer from neighborhood
- Storage
- Visibility buffer zone
- Separation from schools
- Existing population density
- Aesthetics
- Future land use conflicts
- Future Continuum of Care alignment
- Within 1/4 miles from public transit
- PLI/B3 zoning

# Review of Past Criteria, Facilitated Collaborative Process Long Term Care Criteria

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- Can be fenced to provide site security
- Meets health and safety standards within Municipal code and the CDC recommendations
- PLI/B3 zoning

# Review of Past Criteria, Emergency Cold Weather Shelter

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- Open 24/7
- Space to provide meals
- Availability of showers

# Ground Rules for Audience Participation

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Timer	Respect the 3-minute timer to allow everyone a chance to speak
Solutions	While your comments can be critical, remain focused on solutions
Questions	Feel free to ask questions and we will respond if possible



# Helpful Topics

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## Criteria

- What criteria are important to you?

## Mitigation

- What does neighborhood mitigation look like to you?

## Shelter

- What does well-run shelter mean to you?

# Next Steps in the Process, Criteria

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## **Housing and Homelessness Committee Meetings in June after town halls:**

*Weds. June 7, 1 to 3pm, City Hall, 632 W 6<sup>th</sup> Ave, Room 155*

*Mon. June 12, 1 to 3pm, City Hall, 632 W 6<sup>th</sup> Ave, Room 155*

*Weds. June 14, 1 to 3pm, City Hall, 632 W 6<sup>th</sup> Ave, Room 155*

Additional meetings will be scheduled on an as-needed basis.

Virtual options to participate in these meetings will be considered and an updated timeline will be published with that information.

Convener: Housing and Homelessness Committee

Active Audience: Assembly Members, Invited Representatives (detailed below), Municipal Administration

Purpose/Detail: Develop the criteria regarding the interaction between shelter, neighborhoods and institutions and review all prior developed criteria. All criteria will be put in an Assembly Resolution and sent to the full Assembly and community for inclusion on the June 20 agenda for a public hearing and possible vote on July 11.

# Next Steps in the Process, Criteria

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**Regular Assembly Meeting, 5pm, Tues. July 11, Assembly Chambers at the Loussac Library, 3600 Denali, Room 108**

Convener: Anchorage Assembly

Active Audience: Assembly Members, Municipal Administration, Community Members

Purpose/Detail: The Assembly will be holding a public hearing, deliberating, and possibly voting on an Assembly Resolution to adopt criteria for shelter placement within the Municipality of Anchorage.

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# Next Steps in the Process, Location

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## **Housing and Homelessness Committee Meetings in July:**

*Weds. July 12, 1 to 3pm, City Hall, 632 W 6<sup>th</sup> Ave, Room 155*

*Weds. July 19, 1 to 3pm, City Hall, 632 W 6<sup>th</sup> Ave, Room 155*

Additional meetings will be scheduled on an as-needed basis.

Virtual options to participate in these meetings will be considered and an updated timeline will be published with that information.

Convener: Housing and Homelessness Committee

Active Audience: Assembly Members, Invited Representatives (detailed above), Municipal Administration

Purpose/Detail: Review the list of facilities which have been considered in the past as well as consider new opportunities brought to us by the community for usage as shelter. We will run all possible facilities through the criteria adopted by the Assembly to determine what the possibly viable options are within the Municipality.

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# Next Steps in the Process, Location

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## **Town Halls in July and August, dates TBD:**

*Mon. July 24, 5:30 to 8:30pm, Wilda Marston Theatre at the Loussac Library, 3600 Denali*

*Sat. July 29, 1 to 4pm, Wilda Marston Theatre at the Loussac Library, 3600 Denali*

*Thurs. August 3, 5:30 to 8:30pm, Wilda Marston Theatre at the Loussac Library, 3600 Denali*

Convener: Anchorage Assembly and Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness

Active Audience: Community Members

Purpose/Detail: Update the community on the work done and begin getting community feedback on all possibly viable options within the Municipality.

**NOTE:** The remainder of the timeline through November 1, 2023, has not been detailed. The rest of the timeline from August to November will depend on the results of the work from June to July at the Housing and Homelessness Committee and the town halls in July and August. A second half of this timeline will be drafted, reviewed, and published on the Assembly website by August.