

Date: December 22, 2023

To: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager



From: Alison King, Acting Director of Health and Human Services
Christopher Koontz, Director of Community Development



For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: Senior Safe Home

On [February 14, 2023](#), the City Council requested the City Manager to work with all appropriate departments and report back within 90 days exploring the feasibility of providing a senior safe home for victims of elder abuse who are at greater risk of falling into homelessness in the City of Long Beach (City) and Los Angeles County (County), including providing a listing of any City-owned properties or land in which a senior safe home could be established, and any potential external funding sources.

On July 17, 2023, City staff provided an initial update and began inter-departmental meetings with City staff from Health and Human Services Department (LBDHHS), Community Development Department (Department) and volunteers from the Senior Safe Home Coalition. These meetings explored the goals of creating a senior safe home or similar facility, the needs within Long Beach, identification of existing funding streams and understanding of governmental partners that operate within this space of need.

The goal of the Senior Safe Home Coalition is to create a space where seniors experiencing abuse, violence or other trauma could temporarily live until they are able to move into stabilized housing. Servicing seniors in these challenging conditions is the responsibility of the County: Adult Protective Services (APS). Due to the importance of our senior population and the goal of providing service and improving outcomes, the City supplements the services provided by the County.

Since 1999, the LBDHHS has operated the Senior Links program, providing comprehensive case management services for older adults in Long Beach who are at risk of institutionalization. Case management is provided by a Public Health Nurse (1.0 FTE) and a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (0.5 FTE) for vulnerable older adults experiencing difficulties in maintaining a safe and healthy home environment. A needs assessment is performed, a plan of care is developed, and linkages and services are provided to assist older adults to live safely and independently at home.

When City staff encounter and/or suspect elder abuse, a mandated report is made to APS. From January 1, 2022 through July 10, 2023, the Senior Links Program made 43 referrals to APS. Most APS referrals were self-neglect reports. Five APS reports were made for domestic violence involving our Senior Links clients, which involved physical abuse perpetrated by an adult child, grandchild, or roommate. Intimate partner violence among our Senior Links clients was not observed or reported.

Likewise, the Department deploys housing funds to create new affordable senior housing. More than 500 units of senior housing have been constructed or preserved in the last ten years despite the loss of redevelopment funding for such developments. On September 12, 2022, the Department reported to the City Council regarding efforts to increase the production of affordable and market-rate senior housing. The measures outlined in that memorandum remain underway.

City staff explored many options with the Senior Safe Home including accessing existing City affordable housing programs, partnering with larger affordable housing developers or accessing other existing City programs and funding. These discussions remain ongoing however several obstacles remain: some of the seniors the program would serve are not low-income within the federal definition used for all the City's affordable housing funding and programs, the transitory nature of the use does not line up well with housing finance but may better align with homeless services however the population is often not eligible for those services due to income and other factors. Seniors at risk of homelessness are already served through Long Beach's continuum of care and associated programs, shelters and housing.

Ultimately this population and these services are the responsibility of the County, and a strong partnership would be required from the County for any City project to serve this population. A senior safe home within the model contemplated by the Coalition does not currently exist within the United States, although the most analogous facilities are operated in partnership with their respective County, not City. Short of this partnership the City would likely need to dedicate \$10 to \$20 million in general fund dollars to constructing a safe home and then \$1 million or more per year in operating expenses. As these resources are not available, the team will continue exploring other options and pursuing a partnership with the County.

Discussions will continue toward the longer-term goal of creating a Senior Safe Home and the City will continue to grow its senior programming, services and housing offerings. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact Christopher Koontz, Director of Community Development, at Christopher.Koontz@longbeach.gov or (562) 570-6288.

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