

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Rosalynn Hughey

**SUBJECT: UPDATE ON THE SAN
JOSE BRIDGE PROGRAM**

DATE: February 26, 2024

Approved



Date

2/26/24

INFORMATION

This memorandum responds to City Council direction¹ to provide an information memorandum by February 2024 with an analysis of the San José Bridge Program at Guadalupe Emergency Interim Housing, including any potential recommendations to scale the model to other communities. Key performance indicators include number of residents served, number of participants connected to permanent or living wage jobs, and number of participants transitioned to permanent housing.

BACKGROUND

The San José Bridge Program (SJ Bridge) was implemented in 2018 under the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services to employ individuals experiencing homelessness to pick up litter and trash in designated areas of San José. On March 16, 2021², the City Council approved the transfer of SJ Bridge to the Housing Department to expand the program capacity and include a housing component for participants enrolled in the program.

On August 20, 2021, the Housing Department released a Request for Proposals for potential operators of SJ Bridge and the Guadalupe Emergency Interim Housing program with the intent for the two programs to work in collaboration. The Request for Proposal allowed respondents to apply for one or both programs.

Due to delays in constructing the Guadalupe Emergency Interim Housing site, the City expanded the scope of the original Request for Proposals to respond to the critical component of SJ Bridge to offer housing options to program participants. This resulted in the City launching the Temporary Housing Access Program (THAP) to provide motel stays for program participants enrolled in SJ Bridge. Though this expansion was a separate process, the City designed THAP so that it could complement SJ Bridge.

The following is an overview of key timeline events related to SJ Bridge and the Guadalupe

¹ [Memorandum from Mayor, Jimenez, Cohen and Foley, 10/20/2023: Interim Housing Financial Stability - Study of City Interim Housing and Actions Related to Interim Housing Grant Agreements](#)

² [Approval of the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Mayor's March Budget Message March 16, 2021](#)

Emergency Interim Housing program.

- March 8, 2022³: City Council approved an agreement with Goodwill of Silicon Valley (Goodwill) to operate SJ Bridge and focus on employment opportunities for program participants.
- June 28, 2022⁴: City Council approved two agreements with LifeMoves to:
 - Operate the Guadalupe Emergency Interim Housing program and offer temporary shelter for SJ Bridge program participants, and
 - Operate the THAP to provide motel stays for program participants enrolled in SJ Bridge.

Goodwill and LifeMoves formalized their collaboration with a memorandum of understanding. This partnership allows each organization to focus on its expert service area and ensures individuals move to living wage employment and permanent housing.

ANALYSIS

SJ Bridge Program Overview

SJ Bridge provides individuals experiencing homelessness with a path to obtain living wage employment through rapid employment, training, and placement support while leveraging interim and permanent housing opportunities. Program participants are engaged in part-time rapid employment after enrolling in SJ Bridge. As employees of Goodwill, participants are able to build skills and confidence with the goal of graduating into full-time, living-wage careers. These employment opportunities, coupled with direct access to the Guadalupe Emergency Interim Housing Program and THAP, provide SJ Bridge participants with a guided path to self-sufficiency.

Key Performance Indicators

The regional Continuum of Care, a broad group of stakeholders dedicated to ending and preventing homelessness in Santa Clara County, collaborates to develop systemwide performance metrics to assess the effectiveness of the entire system of care. Hence, most of the regional Continuum of Care performance metrics related to employment are based primarily on the number of housed participants.

Although key performance indicators of SJ Bridge rely on metrics in both employment and housing outcomes, the regional Continuum of Care performance metrics, which are primarily benchmarked around housing outcomes (and employment outcomes as secondary benchmarks for performance metrics), were useful, even though SJ Bridge is unique in that employment opportunities are offered before program participants secure permanent housing.

³ [Funding Award with Goodwill of Silicon Valley for the San José Bridge Program March 8, 2022](#)

⁴ [Actions Related to the Grant Agreements for Multiple Homelessness Programs for Fiscal Year 2022-2023 June 28, 2022](#)

Goodwill: Employment Training and Placement Program Performance

Implemented under the Housing Department in March 2022, Goodwill enrolls individuals from homeless encampments throughout San José into SJ Bridge. SJ Bridge employs up to 250 participants into paid work rapidly after enrollment to build skills and confidence for placement into living wage careers. Rapid employment is a part-time work program (up to 180 days) where participants perform beautification tasks such as litter and debris pick up, leaf blowing, and weed trimming. Program participants work up to 20 hours per week while also actively engaging in other training and development activities. All SJ Bridge participants who enter rapid employment as employees of Goodwill start at \$18.00 per hour. The goal is to provide tools that lead to permanent employment and a pathway to living wage employment.

Updates on SJ Bridge since its inception on March 1, 2022 through December 31, 2023 include the following:

- 273 individuals served;
- 79 participants successfully completed the program and gained employment;
 - 52 participants secured permanent full-time employment;
 - 27 participants secured part-time employment; and
- Average hourly wage of all participants who successfully completed the program was \$21.79, with the highest hourly wage reaching \$35.00.

The key performance indicator in Goodwill’s SJ Bridge agreement between March 2022 and December 2023 is summarized in **Table 1** below.

Table 1: Goodwill’s Employment Training and Placement Program Key Performance Indicator

| Key Performance Indicator | Actual |
|---|---|
| 14% of participants who secure permanent employment will earn a monthly income greater than or equal to Santa Clara County’s living wage (\$26.96 per hour) | 6% of participants obtained living wage employment, earning a monthly income greater than or equal to Santa Clara County’s living wage (\$26.96 per hour) |

The 14% benchmark adopted from the Continuum of Care’s regional performance metrics was intended to be applied to permanently housed individuals. SJ Bridge did not meet the 14% benchmark because program participants are not permanently housed; however, they do obtain living wage employment, earning a monthly income greater than or equal to Santa Clara County’s living wage rate. SJ Bridge’s primary goal is to provide an effective pathway to living wage employment, while a secondary goal is to provide housing solutions after program participants enroll in job training or obtain employment.

LifeMoves: Interim Housing and Motel Stay Program Performance

LifeMoves operates two shelter programs to assist SJ Bridge participants with housing stabilization: THAP and Guadalupe Emergency Interim Housing. LifeMoves launched THAP in March 2022, to provide temporary motel stays to SJ Bridge participants while the Guadalupe

Emergency Interim Housing program was under construction. The Guadalupe Emergency Interim Housing program opened in May 2023. This memorandum focuses on the two shelter programs (THAP and Guadalupe Emergency Interim Housing) that accept direct referrals for SJ Bridge participants. However, over 30 SJ Bridge participants were referred to and enrolled in other City-funded housing and shelter programs; data on additional housing and shelter programs is not represented in the information outlined in this memorandum.

Updates on THAP since its inception on March 1, 2022 through December 31, 2023 include the following:

- 226 individuals served;
 - 116 of the 226 individuals were enrolled in SJ Bridge;
- 143 individuals exited THAP; and
 - 64 of the 143 individuals who exited were enrolled in SJ Bridge.

The key performance indicator in LifeMoves’ THAP agreement between March 2022 and December 2023 is summarized in **Table 2** below.

Table 2: LifeMoves’ THAP Key Performance Indicator

| Key Performance Indicator | Actual |
|--|---|
| 32% of participants will exit to permanent housing | 22% of participants exited to permanent housing |

Data regarding THAP participant exit destination is summarized in **Table 3** below.

Table 3: Participant Exits from THAP

| Exit Destination | Number | Percentage |
|---|------------|-------------|
| Permanent (rentals either subsidized or paid by the individuals or move-in to housing with family or friends) | 32 | 22% |
| Temporary (transitional or interim housing and shelter, motels, or stays with family and friends) | 82 | 58% |
| Don’t know, refused to answer, no exit interview | 16 | 11% |
| Unsuccessful (homelessness) | 11 | 8% |
| Death | 2 | 1% |
| Total | 143 | 100% |

Further detailed analysis of exit destination data of SJ Bridge participants in THAP is summarized in **Table 4** below.

Table 4: SJ Bridge Participant Exits from THAP

| Exit Destination | Number | Percentage |
|---|-----------|-------------|
| Permanent (rentals either subsidized or paid by the individuals or move-in to housing with family or friends) | 24 | 38% |
| Temporary (transitional or interim housing and shelter, motels, or stays with family and friends) | 20 | 31% |
| Don't know, refused to answer, no exit interview | 11 | 17% |
| Unsuccessful (homelessness) | 8 | 13% |
| Death | 1 | 1% |
| Total | 64 | 100% |

Updates on the Guadalupe Emergency Interim Housing program since its inception on May 10, 2023 through December 31, 2023 include the following:

- 135 individuals served;
 - 65 of the 135 individuals were enrolled in SJ Bridge;
- 41 individuals exited Guadalupe Emergency Interim Housing; and
 - 15 of the 41 individuals who exited were enrolled in SJ Bridge.

The key performance indicator in LifeMoves' Guadalupe Emergency Interim Housing program agreement between May 2023 and December 2023 is summarized in **Table 5** below.

Table 5: LifeMoves' Guadalupe Emergency Interim Housing Program Key Performance Indicator

| Key Performance Indicator | Actual |
|--|---|
| 32% of participants will exit to permanent housing | 24% of participants exited to permanent housing |

Data regarding the Guadalupe Emergency Interim Housing program participant exit destination is summarized in **Table 6** below.

Table 6: Participant Exits from Guadalupe Emergency Interim Housing Program

| Exit Destination | Number | Percentage |
|---|-----------|-------------|
| Permanent (rentals either subsidized or paid by the individuals or move-in to housing with family or friends) | 10 | 24% |
| Temporary (transitional or interim housing and shelter, motels, or stays with family and friends) | 17 | 42% |
| Don't know, refused to answer, no exit interview | 2 | 5% |
| Unsuccessful (homelessness) | 12 | 29% |
| Death | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 41 | 100% |

Further detailed analysis of exit destination data by SJ Bridge participants in the Guadalupe Emergency Interim Housing program is summarized in **Table 7** below.

Table 7: SJ Bridge Participant Exits from Guadalupe Emergency Interim Housing Program

| Exit Destination | Number | Percentage |
|---|---------------|-------------------|
| Permanent (rentals either subsidized or paid by the individuals or move-in to housing with family or friends) | 7 | 47% |
| Temporary (transitional or interim housing and shelter, motels, or stays with family and friends) | 4 | 27% |
| Don't know, refused to answer, no exit interview | 1 | 6% |
| Unsuccessful (homelessness) | 3 | 20% |
| Death | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 15 | 100% |

Potential Recommendations to Scale the Program Model

Based on the key performance indicators described above, as well as the lessons learned in the last 21 months of operating the program, the Housing Department has discovered several key improvement opportunities to scale the SJ Bridge model and improve the outcomes.

Effectively scaling the SJ Bridge model would be dependent on the following key factors:

- 1) Amending the referral process for enrolling program participants;
- 2) Identifying a funding source to operate an expanded model of the program; and
- 3) Receiving City Council direction to include a proposal for an expanded program model in the City's upcoming budget development process.

Referral Process

The current SJ Bridge agreement with Goodwill ends on June 30, 2024. Should the existing program continue or expand, the process by which participants are recruited will be amended to expand the program's success and optimize greater outcomes for participants.

Currently, Goodwill enrolls SJ Bridge participants directly from homeless encampments then refers them to two temporary housing options, either to THAP or the Guadalupe Emergency Interim Housing program. While the two temporary housing options prioritize SJ Bridge participants, some SJ Bridge participants remain unsheltered while waiting for unit/room availability that are occupied by individuals who are not active in SJ Bridge.

Option for Amending the Referral Process to Recruit Exclusively from Existing Emergency Interim Housing Sites

Recruiting new SJ Bridge participants directly from existing emergency interim housing programs will ensure participants have the requisite shelter first with the opportunity to further advance their housing goals through securing employment.

A challenge has surfaced in which participants enroll in SJ Bridge on the premise that they will work with Goodwill on employment goals; however, shortly after being referred to temporary housing options, they drop out of SJ Bridge. This has created a situation in which individuals who are not active in SJ Bridge are utilizing the limited inventory of temporary housing options set aside for SJ Bridge but are not participating in the employment program. While there is still a benefit to having placed an unsheltered individual in temporary housing, the challenge is that the SJ Bridge's intended outcomes inadvertently suffer. Amending the recruitment and referral process will streamline access and improve outcomes to resolve these challenges.

Funding and Organizational Capacity

In addition to securing a funding source, scaling the SJ Bridge model would also require the assurance that the City's current service provider, Goodwill, has the organizational capacity to operate an expanded program.

In this scenario, Goodwill must confirm whether they could expand SJ Bridge and increase the total number of employed program participants beyond the current 250 SJ Bridge participants annual benchmark.

For example, if the City were to project a 30% increase in serving more program participants, this would be an additional 75 SJ Bridge participants, which totals to a new 325 SJ Bridge participants annual benchmark. In this projection, the SJ Bridge Fiscal Year 2024-2025 program budget would also need to increase by at least 30%, which would result in a \$600,000 increase, potentially raising the current SJ Bridge program budget from \$2,000,000 to approximately \$2,600,000. If directed by City Council, this estimate would require further research and analysis with more defined variables such as cost per participant and other programmatic and administrative-related costs.

Changing the referral process will require that Goodwill has the resources to enhance its services at multiple emergency interim housing program sites across San José. Goodwill would also need to shift staff positions conducting outreach in homeless encampments to outreach to individuals residing in emergency interim housing programs instead. In order to ensure SJ Bridge participants are transported to and from rapid employment and employment training locations, transportation resources will need to increase from the current program model, which includes two locations (THAP and Guadalupe Emergency Interim Housing program site) to multiple locations, which could potentially include up to 10 emergency interim housing program sites.

Additional Opportunities to Improve Program Outcomes

The Rapid Rehousing Program, which provides time-limited rental subsidies with support services, could be expanded to ensure eligible SJ Bridge participants (who have obtained employment) have access to this housing resource. This coordination between the Rapid Rehousing and SJ Bridge programs could also improve the utilization rates and exits to housing outcomes across several emergency interim housing program sites. The Housing Department

HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
February 26, 2024
Subject: Update on the San José Bridge Program
Page 8

would need to conduct further analysis to understand the percentage of those enrolled in SJ Bridge who have been eligible for rapid rehousing in order to propose costs to expand the Rapid Rehousing Program.

SJ Bridge is a unique and successful model in San José that continues to evolve. Combining access to permanent living wage jobs and permanent housing increases the likelihood that the most vulnerable individuals in San José will succeed. The Housing Department will continue to monitor the outcomes of the program and provide updates over time.

/s/

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