

# Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE December 13, 2019

TO Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

SUBJECT **Temporary Inclement Weather Shelter Update and Activation Threshold Revision**

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the City Council with an update on temporary inclement weather shelter operations, lessons learned, a revision to temperature activation threshold, and next steps. The City has operated a temporary inclement weather shelter at Kay Bailey Hutchinson Convention Center a total of six days (November 11-15 and December 10, 2019). Activation of temporary inclement weather shelter on these dates were based on the official forecast from the National Weather Service when evening temperatures were projected to be 36 degrees or less. During these six days, approximately 1,300 emergency shelter beds were utilized which consisted of 605 unduplicated individuals.

Shelter operations has been a collaboration between Office of Homeless Solutions (OHS), Office of Emergency Management, Convention & Event Services, Dallas Police Department, Dallas Fire Rescue, Dallas Animal Services, Public Affairs & Outreach, Marshal's Office and Dallas Security Services. Volunteers consisted of partners from homeless service providers, faith-based organizations, various City of Dallas departments, Parkland, Metrocare, and Transicare. Shelter operations opened each night at 5:30pm and concluded the next morning at 7:30am. Transportation was provided by Office of Homeless Solutions staff, Dallas Connector shuttle, Downtown Dallas Inc. and Union Gospel Mission to take shelter guests to available day shelter locations, which included The Bridge.

The Office of Homeless Solutions was appropriated \$200,000 in FY20 adopted budget for inclement weather sheltering. More than half of this funding has been expended during these six days of operation. The majority of costs is attributed to overtime labor of City staff; operational costs, maintenance, and cleaning of Convention Center; and food for shelter guests and volunteers.

## **Lessons Learned and Revised Activation Threshold**

The activation of a temporary inclement weather shelter is costly and labor-intensive, specifically due to low supply of labor and materials for shelter operation services. Successful operation requires OHS staff who have expertise and experience working with persons experiencing homeless; first responders to keep our vulnerable guests safe and handle emergency medical needs; and the space and infrastructure for intake, feeding, overnight sheltering including cleaning and maintenance on a short notice.

During these six days of operation, attendance of shelter guests was impacted by the temperature. Monday November 11, 2019 was the coldest day (temperature near 28 degrees) with 317 guests total. Tuesday December 11, 2019 had lows at 36 degrees, but it wasn't until late/early morning and the temporary inclement weather shelter housed 97 guests.

Based on the factors mentioned above, staff have reviewed the City function as an overflow shelter designed to ensure safety of unsheltered residents when existing shelter providers have activated their inclement weather protocol make bold their capacity has been reached. Thus, the

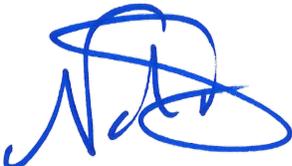
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City is revising the inclement weather activation temperature based on the official forecast from the National Weather Service from 36 degrees to 32 degrees. Additionally, the temperature must be forecasted to reach 32 degrees or below by 10:00pm, which aligns with the closing intake deadline, for the City to activate a temporary inclement weather shelter. This revision will ensure that the City's temporary inclement weather shelter is operational during times of greatest need and will assist with managing budget constraints.

### **Next Steps**

The Office of Homeless Solutions will continue to keep the City Council apprised of any future activations based on forecasted temperatures of 32 degrees or less. The long-term solution of creating an accessory inclement weather shelter use as well as a new chapter in City Code has been in process since May 2019 per City Council direction. Staff's recommendation on establishing appropriate zoning use was discussed with Citizen Homelessness Commission (CHC) on September 12, 2019 and approved by the Zoning Ordinance Advisory Committee (ZOAC) on September 19, 2019 and was forwarded to the City Planning Commission (CPC). The CPC was briefed on November 21, 2019 and will hear this item on their January 9, 2020 agenda. Both zoning and inclement weather shelter program chapters will be briefed to the Housing & Homelessness Solutions Committee on January 14, 2020. After Housing & Homelessness Solutions approval, the next step is full City Council approval. It is anticipated that these steps, along with necessary public engagement will be completed by Spring 2020.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Monica Hardman, Director of Office of Homeless Solutions or Rocky Vaz, Director of Office of Emergency Management.



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