



R-13

Memorandum City of Long Beach

*Working Together
to Serve*



Date: February 14th, 2023

To: Honorable Mayor and Council

From: Councilwoman Mary Zendejas, First Council District
Vice Mayor Cindy Allen, Second Council District

Subject: Feasibility Study on Senior Safe Homes

RECOMMENDATION:

Request the City Manager to work with all of the appropriate departments to report back within 90 days a report exploring the feasibility of providing a senior safe home for victims of elder abuse who are at greater risk of falling into homelessness in Long Beach and Los Angeles County, including a list of any city owned properties or land in which a senior safe home could be established, and potential external funding sources.

DISCUSSION:

Some seniors in our community are subject to abuse which studies show lead to greater risk of homelessness, early death, cause harm to physical and psychological health, destroy social and family ties, cause devastating financial loss, and more. According to the 2022 Point-in-Time Homeless Count, the City of Long Beach reported that about thirty percent of people experiencing homelessness in Long Beach are over the age of 55. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines elder abuse as an intentional act or failure to act that causes or creates a risk of harm to an older adult [age 60 or older]. According to research in the American Journal of Public Health, one in ten adults aged 60 years or older will have experienced some form of elder abuse within the past year. Elder abuse can quickly destabilize an older adult's financial security and therefore lead to homelessness. Adult Protective Services (APS) reports that about ten percent of all reported elder abuse victims are at risk of losing their home. Elder abuse most commonly occurs at the hands of a caregiver or trusted individual.

The scope of the problem can be determined by research estimates and the number of elder abuse cases reported by county Adult Protective Services. Based on 2020 Census data, there are currently around 81,009 residents over the age of 60 in Long Beach, which leads to estimates of 8,000 of those individuals having experienced some form of elder abuse within the past year, and 800 of those individuals facing housing insecurity. In addition to that estimate, Los Angeles County Adult Protective Services recorded 28,868 new elder abuse cases for the 2021 calendar year. Both numbers are too large for our community, and very likely underestimates as the CDC

has stated cases in which individuals do not seek treatment or are not reported due to fear or the inability to communicate go uncounted.

The estimate of 8,000 seniors potentially being the victim of abuse in our community is quite striking but given that Census projections show this population nearly doubling in size and increasing in overall percent of population by the year 2060, we can see that these numbers will only increase as time goes on. The City of Long Beach needs to explore increasing our capacity to prevent elder abuse and homelessness within our older adult population, while expanding on our ability to care for those individuals that have experienced it.

Historically, Long Beach created the Long Beach Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Elder Abuse Prevention Team with support from the Archstone Foundation in 2006, which was designed to build capacity and education in the community with regards to elder abuse. This program continued until 2010, where it was re-established as a coalition-based approach and still provides services to this day. The work of this team was built on preventing elder abuse, which while an end in and of itself, did not have the capacity for caring for individuals that have suffered from abuse. This is the gap in care for seniors in Long Beach and Los Angeles County, as there are currently no facilities available for victims of elder abuse in the region. This is also the gap in care for seniors in the Western United States as there is only one such senior-centric facility west of the Mississippi located in Sacramento, which accommodates six residents.

Because of the lack of care for victims of elder abuse in the region, an organization has recently been formed to address this issue, the Long Beach Senior Safe Home Coalition, with the goal of creating a senior safe home that is able to serve seniors in Long Beach and Los Angeles County. Senior safe homes, also known as elder abuse shelters, are in many states in the Central and Eastern regions of the United States of America. These facilities provide victims of elder abuse safe, short-term housing and coordinated services to help adults recover from trauma and return to their communities when possible. The shelters are in places such as long-term care facilities (e.g., assisted living facility) or houses, and additionally provide services tailored to the needs of their local community. The Long Beach Senior Safe Home Coalition has been in contact with regional government agencies and officials to seek support for a 15-unit location in Long Beach with the ability to care for residents for up to 90 days and fill the gap in care for elders that are the victim of abuse in Long Beach and the surrounding region.

Since a Long Beach senior safe home or elder abuse shelter would be of benefit to seniors in Long Beach and Los Angeles County and support our homeless emergency crisis, this letter requests the City Manager to prepare a report on the feasibility of a Long Beach Senior Safe Home or similar program, including a list of any city owned properties or land in which a senior safe home could be established, and potential external funding sources within 90 days.

As a fact of urgency, this item is relevant to the proclaimed local emergency caused by homelessness.

This matter has been reviewed by Budget Manager Grace H. Yoon on Friday, January 27, 2023.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This recommendation requests the City Manager to work with all of the appropriate departments to report back within 90 days a report exploring the feasibility of providing a senior safe home for victims of elder abuse who are at greater risk of falling into homelessness in Long Beach and Los Angeles County, including a list of any city owned properties or land in which a senior safe home could be established, and potential external funding sources. The requested action is anticipated to require a moderate level of staff hours beyond the scope of duties and a moderate impact on existing City Council priorities.