



# Weekly Management Report

## May 24, 2024

### 1. Memo

City Manager Tracking List Item #2610  
Homeless Suites at 323-333 Front Street  
and 10 E. Verdugo Follow Up Memo  
**Community Development Department**



# MEMORANDUM



## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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**DATE:** April 30, 2024

**TO:** Justin Hess, City Manager

**FROM:** Patrick Prescott, Community Development Director   
BY: Simone McFarland, Assistant Community Development Director

**SUBJECT:** Homeless Suites at 323-333 Front Street and 10 E. Verdugo Follow up Memo – City Manager Tracking List Item #2610

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During the City Council presentation on April 9, 2024, Council approved the request to develop a Homeless Solutions Center (Attachment 1). Council also requested a memo describing the reasoning why the inside of the former piano store building was excluded as an area for apartment style suites. Below is a synopsis of staff's analysis.

### BACKGROUND

Staff worked with Kadre Architects to develop two site plans which would include enclosed suites inside the existing building – both within the existing offices in the south side of the building and the former piano store structure to the north. The first design (Attachment 2) allowed for 25 guest rooms (two beds in each room), with five rooms compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for a total of 50 beds. Offices would then be added on the first floor of both to accommodate the service providers and possibly service provider partner's building along with showers on both floors. The first site design was merely to see how many rooms could fit into the building.

The second design (Attachment 3) included ensuite rooms with bathrooms and showers in only the piano side of the building and one bed per room. Using this design, the offices would stay in the office building to the south which would be used to provide services to the homeless residents. By creating two floors of ensuite rooms, the building could only accommodate 17 rooms/beds, eight on the first floor and nine on the second floor.

Both of these designs were ultimately rejected, and the preferred configuration presented on April 9, 2024, was presented for the following reasons.

## **DISCUSSION**

### Physical Restrictions

For suites to be added into the facility, building code requires that each room have two access points for ingress/egress. This means that the rooms could only be placed along the edges of the entire building and windows would need to be added at each suite location for both sides of the building; between 17 to 25 windows would need to be cut out of the concrete block wall. While this is possible, there would be significant engineering requirements to ensure the building's integrity that would be costly.

Additionally, the first site design did not allow for separate showers and bathrooms for each unit; they would remain as shared space. In the second design, bathrooms and showers were added to each suite, which reduced the number of suites greatly and therefore, did not meet the requirements as noted below in the financial section. Additionally, there is no elevator within either side of the building. To add suites on the second floor, an elevator would need to be incorporated into the design. This is also costly.

There are currently offices on the first and second floor of the south side of the office building (non-piano side). In the first design, these offices would have to be removed and new offices built. Adding suites within the inside of the building limits space that might be better used for adding future social services such as mental health, substance rehabilitation, and medical services to name a few.

Lastly, the piano store section of the building is currently one level with a small mezzanine. A second floor along the edges would need to be built out. While there are sprinklers located within the building, these would need to be reconfigured to accommodate the suites on both floors.

### Financial Considerations

For the project to be financially sustainable for the service provider and the City approximately 50 beds would be required. In the first design, there are 50 beds, the minimum requirement; however, the structural requirements make this option infeasible. The costs to reconfigure the building including adding in the windows, elevator, demolition of the existing offices, and rebuilding new offices, will be much more expensive than adding self-sufficient suites within the parking lot that include both a bathroom and a shower along with redesigning a portion of the building to add other service amenities in the future.

In the second design with bathrooms and showers, the number of beds is reduced to 17, which is financially unviable on its own.

Staff didn't obtain specific costs for either of these scenarios as they did not seem to be an optimal use of the facility.

## **CONCLUSION**

By adding the suites on the outside of the building, homeless tenants' benefit by having a separate shower and bathroom in each unit and supportive services on the inside of the building, which would include health and wellness. Tenants will also have an exit door from their outside suite that leads directly to outside as opposed to a "hotel" type setting where they must access their room by a long-enclosed hallway. The City could repurpose the use existing offices for the service provider's needs along with creating partnerships with other non-profits who serve the homeless. This is a critical component of the Homeless Solutions Center. Additionally, the City would save costs by not having to add an elevator, reconfigure the fire sprinklers to accommodate two floors of suites, and the demolition and rebuilding offices.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 – Staff Report from April 9, 2024

Attachment 2 – Site Design 1

Attachment 3 – Site Design 2

# STAFF REPORT



## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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**DATE:** April 9, 2024

**TO:** Justin Hess, City Manager

**FROM:** Patrick Prescott, Community Development Department Director  
Via: Simone McFarland, Asst. Director Community Development

**SUBJECT:** Adoption of a Resolution Declaring a Shelter Crisis in the City of Burbank; Approval to Create a Shelter and Housing Accessibility Through the Development of a Homeless Solutions Center Located at 323-333 South Front Street and 10 East Verdugo Avenue, Burbank; and Approval of a Request For \$3,450,000 from the Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Regional Housing Trust

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. Adopt A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BURBANK DECLARING A SHELTER CRISIS APPROVING THE SUBMISSION OF A DECLARATION OF A SHELTER CRISIS PURSUANT TO SB 850 (CHAPTER 48, STATUTES OF 2018 AND GOVERNMENT CODES § 8698.1, § 8698.2, and § 8698.4) TO THE LOS ANGELES CONTINUUM OF CARE.
2. Review and approve the development of a Homeless Solutions Center located at 323-333 South Front Street and 10 East Verdugo Avenue, Burbank.
3. Approve the request of \$3,450,000 from the Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Regional Housing Trust to help develop the project.

### **BACKGROUND**

On July 12, 2022, staff presented a report to Council requesting authorization for pre-planning and feasibility analysis of developing a tiny homes village (transitional housing) project at the northeast corner of North Lincoln Street and North Victory Place, referred to as "Lincoln Yard" along with authorizing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for related consultant services (Attachment 1).

During the presentation, Council expressed concerns regarding the proximity of the proposed development to residential neighborhoods, as well as lack of access to public

transportation. Council directed staff to also explore similar options at the City-owned building located at 323-333 S. Front Street, commonly referred to as the Hollywood Piano building, while still working on Lincoln Yard. Additionally, Council authorized the ability to issue an RFP for a site feasibility of interim housing at 323-333 S. Front Street.

In December 2022, the City's five-year (2022-2027) Homelessness Plan ("Plan") was approved by Council. There are two strategies in the Plan that relate to the potential development of a Homeless Solution Center. Strategy 3 discusses the need to create a shelter and housing accessibility, which can be accomplished through various approaches. One option is to create interim housing that can include shelters and/or transitional housing including a tiny home village.

The lack of available units/beds within Burbank is a constant challenge and interim housing from neighboring communities often has catchment zone requirements (areas where homeless persons must reside to use the services within the specific zone). Catchment zones limit the City's ability to offer shelter to homeless individuals residing in Burbank.

The second strategy related to shelter and housing accessibility is Strategy 4, Goal 4.3, which discusses the addition of spaces allocated toward a Safe Parking Program. On May 23, 2023, Council was provided with a presentation on Safe Parking for Vehicle Dwellers. The staff report (Attachment 2) noted that there are approximately 50 vehicles and 15 to 20 RVs, for a total of 65 to 70 vehicle dwellers in Burbank on any given night. The 2023 Point-in-Time Count confirmed these numbers by reporting that there were approximately 45 vehicles and 15 RVs counted for a total of 60 vehicle dwellers in Burbank. Burbank's homeless population was 252 people, which was a slight decrease from 261 the previous year.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Recommended Use of Front Street Instead of Lincoln Yard**

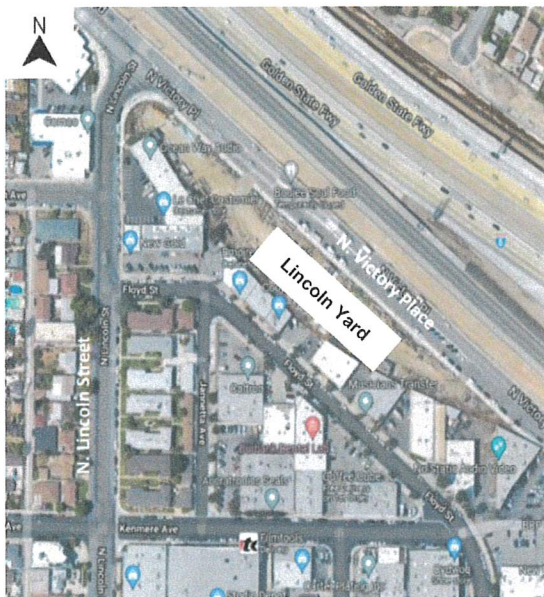
Staff recommends Council consider the use of the City-owned property on 323-333 S. Front Street and 10 Verdugo Avenue (the Hollywood Piano Store and adjacent sites) for a Homeless Solutions Center instead of the Lincoln Yard. As directed by Council, staff completed feasibility studies of the subject sites and determined the Front Street property to be the preferred site for the development of a Homelessness Solutions Center.





The Front Street property is recommended because it is adjacent to the rail service on the Southeast of the Interstate 5, along with numerous bus lines that converge here. To the North and East is Interstate 5 and on the Northwest side of the property is the Metrolink parking lot. Interstate 5, the rail tracks, and the Olive Bridge provide buffers to the nearest residential areas.

Additionally, the current location of The SAFE, Burbank's homeless storage site and help center, is located within the proposed site location on Front Street. It is also feasible that a portion of the adjacent Metrolink parking lot could be utilized to provide a small Safe Parking Program for cars and vans. There is currently only one tenant left in the Front Street building, and they are on a month-to-month lease.



The Lincoln Yard site is not recommended for the proposed Homelessness Solutions Center for a variety of reasons. Lincoln Yard has a residential neighborhood located along North Lincoln Street and is designated as public right-of-way, which means it is not reflected as a parcel in the County Assessor's records, nor does it have a zoning designation. A public right-of-way vacation would need to occur and a parcel map created. Staff conducted a survey of the proposed parcel and can request an Assessor's parcel number. Additionally, staff determined that there is an electrical utility easement along the back of the property that would limit development and that the cost to bring water and sewer to the site would be significant as the infrastructure needed is not adjacent to the location.

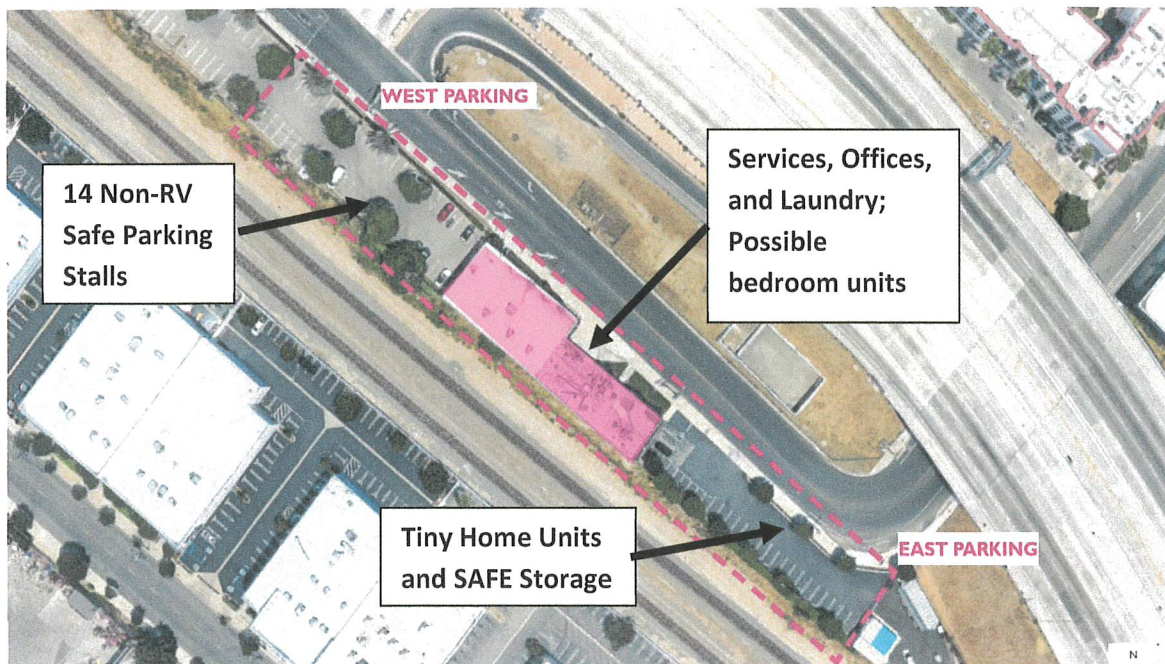


### Front Street Effort

Staff hired Kadre Architects to create site plan options for parcels at 323-333 S. Front Street (Hollywood Piano building), 10 Verdugo Avenue (currently used as The SAFE), and a portion of the adjacent Front Street Metrolink parking lot. Community Development Department (CDD) staff has held various meetings with other City departments to receive input on the design to address ingress and egress concerns, existing utilities, and potential future development options for Permanent Supportive Housing. When evaluating the proposed site, it was found that it is constrained by the following physical factors:

- 1) The site is very narrow with a railroad directly behind it, limiting access for safety vehicles in case of an emergency.
- 2) Front Street is slated for an in-street, protected two-way bicycle cycle-track to be constructed in 2024 along the west side of the street. A protective K-rail<sup>1</sup> between cyclists and vehicles at the corner of S. Front Street and Verdugo Avenue will be constructed.
- 3) If enclosed apartment-type bedrooms and baths are added to the inside of the building, they must be constructed along the outside walls to allow for two routes of evacuation. This reduces the number of units that can be added.
- 4) There are large utility lines including electrical, water and sewer running underneath a portion of the site.

Despite these constraints, staff believes the proposed site is a good option for the Homelessness Solutions Center which includes a small transitional shelter (Tiny Homes) and safe parking for cars and vans.



<sup>1</sup> A modular concrete or plastic traffic barrier used to separate lanes of traffic.

The proposed plan for the Homeless Solutions Center would include:

- 1) Approximately 26 tiny home units that could house approximately 49 beds, including Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant single-unit beds in the Southeast parking lot.
- 2) Storage via The SAFE for both transitional housing residents and non-residents.
- 3) Laundry services within the existing building.
- 4) Caseworker and security offices, office-worker kitchen, reception area, and dining/day use area.
- 5) 14 non-RV Safe parking spots (two ADA compliant) and nine staff parking spaces.
- 6) Portable restroom facility in The SAFE parking lot.
- 7) Fencing and privacy screening.
- 8) Equipment limiting access to the parking area.

### Safe Parking

It is estimated that Burbank currently has 60 to 70 vehicle dwellers in the City. Additionally, a number of these are frequently parked overnight in and near City parks, which is causing complaints for those areas that abut residential property.

Staff is proposing a Safe Parking Program to be included within the Homeless Solutions Center by utilizing the southern portion of the adjacent Metrolink station parking lot. The program is scaled based on the size of the lot to provide parking for 14 non-RV (automobile) vehicles. Staff recommends not allowing RVs at the site as these initially bring more complexity such as parking during the day, possible breakdowns, larger parking spaces, and additional vehicles needed for daytime travel and commutes.

The lot's estimated hours of operation would be opening at 6:00 p.m. and closing the following morning at 7:00 a.m. There would be security 24 hours-a-day, 7 days-a-week at the site and the area would be gated and fenced. Safe Parking participants would be required to adhere to the following rules:

- Obeying the law;
- Adhering to good neighbor policies enforced by a program operator;
- Registering with the Coordinated Entry System;
- Abiding by program curfews that limit noise;
- Not using generators and/or run car engines during the evening; and
- Arriving within designated time periods unless other accommodations have been previously approved.

### Glendale and Pasadena Safe Parking Lots

Currently, neither the City of Glendale nor the City of Pasadena have city sponsored Safe Parking lots. Glendale does not currently have plans to consider safe parking lots and Pasadena considered the idea (approximately two years ago), but elected not to move forward due to zoning concerns and conflicts with their overnight parking ordinances. Pasadena staff indicated that there is a local church that provides safe parking without city involvement. The Foothill Unity Center Safe Parking lot provides five spaces with a

church/host. The program currently operates without funding from the City of Pasadena, and includes security, case management, and administration.

It should be noted that unlike Burbank, both Glendale and Pasadena have citywide parking restrictions that discourage vehicle dwellers. The City of Glendale restricts all large vehicles from parking more than two hours on any street, which discourages motorhome dwellers. The City of Pasadena prohibits overnight parking of any vehicle on any street, which drastically reduces the ability for vehicle-dwellers to be accommodated in Pasadena. Both approaches to managing on street parking require significant citywide parking permitting and enforcement.

Next Steps for the Proposed Homeless Solutions Center

Should Council direct staff to move forward with designating 323-333 S. Front Street and its adjacent property as the Homeless Solutions Center, next steps for the project would include outreach, funding, Catchment Zone Designation, and Planning and Building Code requirements.

*Outreach*

After the initial site and concept design have been established, staff and Kadre Architects will coordinate a minimum of two community meetings open to the general public and a presentation to the Planning Commission. The dates and times will be coordinated through the City's Public Information Office. Additionally, staff will talk with homeless service providers to ensure our design provides easy integration into their programs.

*Funding*

Developing the Homeless Solutions Center is expected to cost approximately \$5,000,000. Council previously approved \$500,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for predevelopment work. Additionally, funds from the Successor Agency (\$500,000) and a Measure H grant (\$223,382) would be used for pre-development work. Staff recommends that Council approve a request of \$3,450,000 in funding from the Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Regional Housing Trust, a newly formed entity that received \$21,000,000 for the development of housing in the Tri-City area. Each city – Pasadena, Glendale, and Burbank – will receive approximately \$6.9M after overhead and staffing for the Trust is established. Additionally, CDBG funding in the amount of \$1,180,390 that was originally allocated to the previous Boys and Girls Club location (2244 N. Buena Vista) could be reallocated to this project in the future as Permanent Local Housing Allocation (PLHA) funding has been identified for that project.

In addition, on-going services will be required and staff is working on a Request for Proposals (RFP) to obtain estimated costs. The Los Angeles County Supervisor's Office has expressed interest in assisting with costs and there is a possibility that if Measure H<sup>2</sup> or some similar initiative is renewed, there could be funding put in place for city services. While a specific budget will not be available until RFP responses are reviewed and a contract is negotiated, ongoing costs are estimated to be approximately \$1,000,000 annually. Council has allocated between \$300,000 to \$500,000 of the Permanent Local

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<sup>2</sup> In December 2016, Los Angeles County declared a State of Emergency on homelessness. In March 2017, Los Angeles County voters approved Measure H, a ¼-cent sales tax over 10 years. Measure H created the first revenue stream dedicated to addressing and preventing homelessness countywide.



Housing Allocation (PLHA) between now and the next five years towards services at the Solutions Center. The PLHA fees are ongoing funds provided through Senate Bill 2, a \$75 recording fee on real estate documents to provide affordable housing options in California and could provide a portion of the funds needed.

#### *Catchment Zone Designation*

A catchment zone is the prioritization of assisting people within a designated geographical boundary that is within the service delivery area of a homeless shelter or program. As an example, prioritization can be given to unsheltered individuals that identify Burbank as their community of origin due to field observations and/or case notes in the Homeless Management Information System by service providers. If Burbank develops its own Homeless Solutions Center, the City will work with various partners and the Continuum of Care agencies on direct referrals of people who have a history of homelessness with a direct link to Burbank. The catchment zone would apply to both the Safe Parking lot and the tiny homes (transitional housing). Further, the catchment zone can be approved by our elected body to meet the needs of our unsheltered residents. Staff recommends that the catchment zone be carefully created to prioritize people who are from Burbank.

The proposed Burbank Homeless Solutions Center's catchment zone is not unique as many other shelters use their own prioritization to primarily serve their unhoused residents. However, the Los Angeles Continuum of Care encourages a local jurisdiction building their own shelter to work together on expanding the available beds that may be available to serve the region, known as Service Planning Areas; Burbank is in Service Planning Area 2<sup>3</sup>. The long-term sustainability of the Homeless Solutions Center will require funding for operations, mental health services, and permanent housing. Through the Los Angeles Continuum of Care, these funds will be accessible to Burbank if we choose to work together. Additionally, homeless providers have found that people experiencing homelessness are more likely to accept housing if it is close to their community and the services they receive. Burbank finds this to be true as we have been able to relocate some of the people experiencing homelessness to nearby shelters because of their familiarity with neighborhoods and services. More recently, shelter facilities are unable to meet the current housing demand, which exceeds the availability of interim housing and shelters in our region.

#### *Planning and Building Code Requirements/Declaring a Shelter Crisis*

Should Council direct staff to proceed, a Resolution Declaring a Shelter Crisis under Government Code §8698.2 must be adopted; this Resolution would sunset on January 1, 2026. If adopted, staff will propose an Ordinance that complies with Government Code §8698.4, allowing the City to adopt local standards and procedures for the design, site development, and operation of homeless shelters that are tailored to the needs and unique neighborhood fabric of the City. This will streamline the development of the Homeless Solutions Center and would assist with any future projects such as the previous Boys and Girls Club location, by creating exemptions from compliance with applicable planning and zoning standards, local building approval procedures including Building and Safety codes under California Building Codes Appendix P, and exemption from the

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<sup>3</sup> Service Planning Area 2 is considered the San Fernando Valley/Santa Clarita Valley regions and include 31 Los Angeles County cities such as Burbank, Glendale, Sun Valley, Universal City, and Van Nuys <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/chs/services.htm>



California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements for homeless shelters (including tiny homes) provided the City adopts standards and procedures for homeless shelters consistent with ensuring minimal public health and safety. It should be noted that since the project would utilize CDBG federal funds, it would be required to comply with the applicable provisions of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The future project at 2244 N. Buena Vista that will be brought to Council would also benefit from a Shelter Crisis declaration as those provisions would also be invoked with their Homeless Access Center proposal.

### **COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

As noted above, additional community outreach has not yet been completed regarding the Homeless Solutions Center. Should Council direct staff to move forward, staff will complete the initial site and concept design and then conduct community outreach which will include community meetings and a presentation to the Planning Commission. The dates and times will be coordinated through the City's Public Information Office and include social media announcing the meetings.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

The report to Council for continuation of work toward the development of a Homeless Solutions Center at 323-333 South Front Street and 10 East Verdugo Avenue is statutorily exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), because it is a feasibility study for possible future actions that have not yet been adopted or approved by Council (CEQA Guidelines, §15262). In addition, this project would be exempt from CEQA Guidelines, §15269 as it is an emergency project that requires specific actions necessary to prevent or mitigate an emergency. Lastly, Government Code §8698.4(a)(4) specifically states that CEQA shall not apply to actions taken by a city to lease, convey, or encumber land, or provide financial assistance to, a homeless shelter constructed or allowed Government Code §8698.4. However, if the Project is approved by Council, it would be subject to an environmental assessment under NEPA.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Should the request of funding of \$3,450,000 be approved by the Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Regional Housing Trust, these funds will be appropriated to the Building Improvements, Tiny Homes Project. A reallocation of CDBG funding would be requested in the future. The total cost of the project is currently estimated to be \$5M; however, this is just an estimate until the actual construction bids are received as noted above in the "Funding" section.

### **CONCLUSION**

The City of Burbank must address its urgent homeless population needs such as interim housing (shelters & transitional housing), designated parking lots that provide a place to safely park and sleep overnight, and services that can assist in finding shelter, storage of personal items, and help with drug rehabilitation and mental health. The development of a Homeless Solutions Center will not only meet two of the Homelessness Plan's goals but more importantly provide a place where Burbank's homeless can receive assistance to help provide basic needs in a safe place. The designation of 323-333 Front Street, its adjacent site at 10 East Verdugo, and the ability to use a small portion of the Metrolink

Parking lot will continue the work toward developing a Homeless Solutions Center in the City and in return, will help to address homelessness in Burbank through programs and services provided by the center.

**ATTACHMENT**

Attachment 1 – Resolution

Attachment 2 – Lincoln Yard Staff Report July 12, 2022

Attachment 3 – Safe Parking Staff Report May 23, 2023



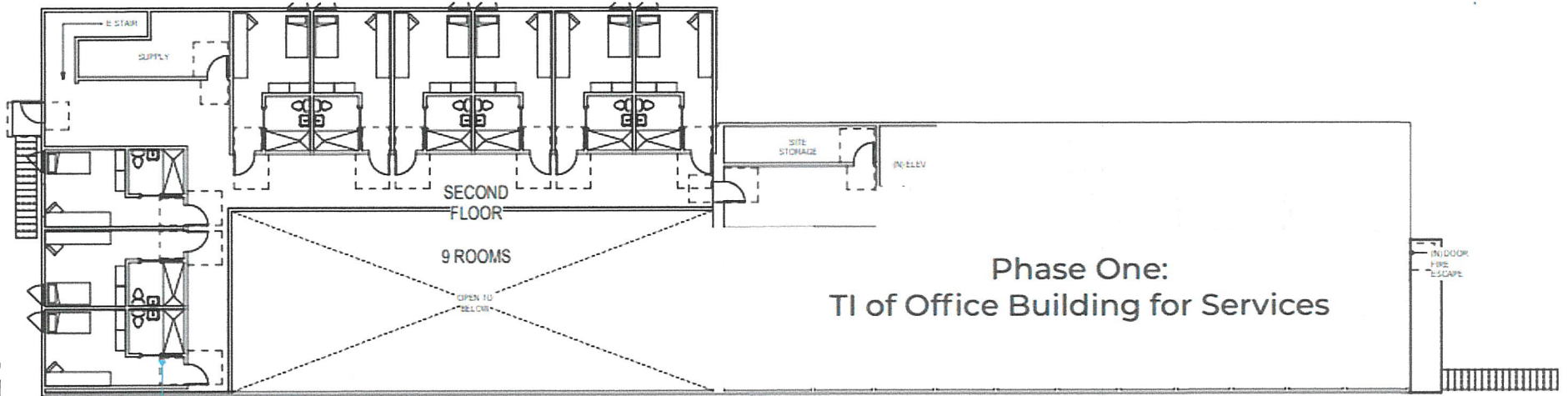




# Building Option 1: En-Suite Rooms

SECOND FLOOR

9 Rooms



New Plumbing throughout building