

DATE: March 20, 2007  
TO: Honorable Mayor Hanrahan and Members of the City Commission  
VIA: Russ Blackburn, City Manager  
FROM: Lee Ann Lowery, Assistant City Manager *lal*  
SUBJECT: Site Recommendations for One-Stop Assistance Center for the Homeless

### **SITE SEARCH AND EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Pursuant to the award of the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the One-Stop Assistance Center, staff has completed a search for appropriate sites for the center. More than 125 sites, public and private, located in all quadrants of the City were identified and reviewed (see Attachment A). In addition to considering public property owned by the City, City staff also contacted the County Manager and the Executive Director of Facilities for the Alachua County School Board to determine if these entities had surplus property which could be considered.

The site selection process evaluated sites based upon the criteria approved by the City Commission at the December 11, 2006 meeting. The process also evaluated the suitability of sites based on the services to be provided at the one-stop center which include, but are not limited to:

1. Case management and service coordination
2. Personal care services, including showers, lockers and laundry facilities
3. Personal business services, including mail, telephone and internet services
4. Education programs
5. Social interaction
6. Meal distribution, including lunch and dinner

These services will likely attract more than 100 clients per day, many of them in large groups for specific periods of time.

As a result of the above factors, most of the sites were eliminated for one or more of the following reasons:

1. Many existing facilities could not be renovated at a reasonable cost to accommodate the personal care services (showers, laundry) to be provided.
2. Many existing facilities and sites could not provide adequate space for the large number of clients expected for meal distribution and/or social interaction.
3. Even if the site and/or facility were adequate in size for the one-stop center services, appropriate buffers to protect existing neighborhoods could not be provided. This was especially true of leased spaces which are primarily located in existing neighborhoods.

4. Some sites and facilities which could accommodate the services were too expensive. For example, a building on ten acres for sale in northwest Gainesville was more than \$10 million. Another 10,000 square foot building in southwest Gainesville was more than \$2 million.

### **ALTERNATE APPROACH TO SITE SELECTION**

The initial approach to site selection was to identify existing facilities of 5000-6000 square feet that could be renovated and leased for at least three years. At the end of the initial term, the lease could be renewed if both parties agreed, although usually at an increase in rent. By mutual agreement, the lease could also contain an option to buy the property at the end of the initial term, if it was determined the site was sufficient in size to accommodate future expansion or development of the campus concept envisioned in GRACE.

As a result of the constraints described above, staff began exploring alternative approaches to providing the one-stop center. Given the difficulties in identifying existing facilities that could accommodate the programmatic needs of the one-stop center, staff began investigating an approach that would utilize vacant land for placement of a modular building. The building could be leased or purchased and, given the 20-30 year life-cycle of a modular building, this approach could serve as a long-term solution. Additional benefits of this approach are listed below:

1. If sufficient in size (3-5 acres), the vacant land could accommodate additional facilities for the campus concept envisioned in GRACE.
2. An attractive modular building can be constructed to include the required facilities for personal care services.
3. Vacant land could be sufficient in size to provide adequate buffer.
4. Vacant land could be sufficient in size to accommodate large crowds anticipated for the meal distribution and provide an attractive environment for group social interaction.
5. The time for construction and delivery of a modular building is equal to or less than the time required for renovation of existing facilities.
6. Annual costs associated with renovation and leasing of a short-term facility and annual costs associated with lease or lease-purchase of a modular are similar.

### **SITE REZONING**

It should be noted that all sites, whether leased or owned, will require rezoning. However, the process differs, depending on the ownership and the zoning of the property.

If the property is privately owned and to be leased, sites may require separate processes: land use change, rezoning and/or special use permit, depending on the property's current zoning designation. To protect the owner's current zoning, the City would be required to rezone the property to a higher use that allows social services by

right and meal distribution by special use permit. An alternate approach would be to rezone the property to Planned Development zoning which would maintain the owner's current zoning and allow meal distribution and social services. Depending on the current land use, a land use change may also be required.

If the property is owned by the City, the property would be rezoned to Public Service (if needed). An ordinance would be prepared that would specify the uses intended for the site, which can include social services, meal distribution and other related services, even residential facilities. No land use change would be required for property owned by the City.

The time frame to process a rezoning is estimated to be 6-8 months following the date of the required neighborhood workshop. This neighborhood workshop is the important first step in the rezoning process.

### **FUNDING**

Based on the budget needs and current funding identified for the operation of the one-stop center, approximately \$67,000 per year is available for all costs associated with the lease or purchase of the facility. In addition, the City Commission has been setting aside \$50,000 per year for capital costs associated with the one-stop center; approximately \$100,000 is currently available for building renovation and/or site development costs. The costs vary by site and approach and estimates have not been provided at this time. The City Commission action would be contingent upon negotiations, funding commitments from the County and identification of any additional funds that might be needed based on these cost estimates.

Often the costs to renovate a leased facility can be incorporated into the annual lease. The cost to purchase or lease a new modular building can also include all site development and installation costs. In addition, there may be an attractive, "gently used" modular that can be purchased or leased at a significant savings.

### **SITE RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on utilizing two approaches to siting the One-Stop Assistance Center for the Homeless, staff is recommending one of two sites be selected. One site is a leased facility and the other is a campus site for locating a modular building. Alternative sites are listed for consideration. However, these alternative sites do not address the programmatic needs or meet the approved site criteria as well as the two recommended sites.

The evaluation of both recommended and alternative sites against the site selection criteria is contained in Attachment B. It should be noted that definitions have been developed by staff for some criteria to clarify the basis for determining whether a site or facility met, or did not meet, the criteria. Detailed descriptions of the recommended sites

are included as Attachments C and D. An overview of the alternative sites is provided in Attachment E. Photographs of typical modular buildings are included in Attachment F.

### RECOMMENDED SITES

Leased Facility	3335 N. Main Terrace (Private Owner)
Campus Site for Modular Building	Vacant land on west side of Waldo Rd, north of 39 <sup>th</sup> Avenue (City-Owned)

### ALTERNATIVE SITES

Leased Facility	55 NW 23 <sup>rd</sup> Avenue (Salvation Army Thrift Store – Private Owner)
	1000 NE 16 <sup>th</sup> Avenue (Private Owner)
	Vacant land on 13 <sup>th</sup> Avenue (Landfill site – City Owned; not recommended for campus but could be utilized for a leased modular)
Campus Site for Modular Building	2532 SE Hawthorne Road (Private Owner)
	Other City-owned sites may be considered if none of the above are acceptable.

### COMMISSION SELECTION PROCESS

As the City Commission selects a site for the one-stop assistance center for the homeless, staff recommends a process that will assist in quickly decreasing neighborhood concerns regarding potential sites that will not be considered. This will also help focus public discussion and input on the highest priority sites. To that end, staff recommends the following process be utilized for selection:

1. The City Commission hear the presentation on the recommended sites by City staff.
2. The City Commission obtain additional information from City staff as needed regarding the recommended sites and any alternative sites of interest.
3. Prior to public input, the City Commission determine that only the recommended sites will be considered for further discussion. The City Commission may choose to amend the recommended sites to include alternative sites if desired.
4. If more than two sites are being considered, the City Commission conduct a rank voting process as described below to determine the top two sites.
5. Following selection of the top two sites, the City Commission open the discussion for public input.

6. Following public input, the City Commission take a final vote on the recommended site for the one-stop assistance center for the homeless using the rank voting process described below.

The rank voting process described in #4 and #6 above is described below:

1. If more than two sites are being considered in Step #4 above, each Commissioner will submit their top two sites, in no particular order. If only two sites are being considered at Step #4, the Commission will proceed to #3 below.
2. The City Clerk will tally the votes and announce the top two sites.
3. Following public input, each Commissioner will submit a vote for their top site.
4. The City Clerk will tally the votes and announce the site with the majority vote.
5. The City Clerk will ask for a motion on the selected site.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

- 1) Select a site for the One-Stop Assistance Center for the Homeless.
- 2) Subject to City Attorney approval, authorize staff to negotiate a lease, lease with a purchase option or lease-purchase agreement for the selected site, contingent upon:
  - a. Confirmation of adequate funding, divided equally between the City and Alachua County Board of County Commissioners;
  - b. Rezoning of the property; and
  - c. Conducting due diligence to confirm environmental and engineering suitability of site for intended use.
- 3) Authorize staff to proceed with rezoning of the property, including development or execution of needed documents and conducting a neighborhood meeting pursuant to the rezoning process.