



SAN DIEGO
HOUSING
COMMISSION

INFORMATIONAL REPORT

DATE ISSUED: November 4, 2021

REPORT NO: HCR21-099

ATTENTION: Chair and Members of the San Diego Housing Commission
For the Agenda of November 12, 2021

SUBJECT: September 2021 Reporting Update for City of San Diego's
Storage Connect Center I

NO ACTION IS REQUIRED ON THE PART OF THE HOUSING COMMISSION

SUMMARY

The Housing Authority of the City of San Diego (Housing Authority) and San Diego City Council (City Council) require the San Diego Housing Commission (Housing Commission) to “provide written reports on number of Clients served, utilization rate, any changes to operation, outreach activity, connections to other services and housing, at least monthly and upon request by the Council President/Chair of the Housing Authority” (Housing Authority Resolution HA-1777).

BACKGROUND

The Housing Commission administers the agreements for the City of San Diego's (City) Homeless Shelters and Services Programs based on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Housing Commission and the City of San Diego (City) that first took effect on July 1, 2010. The Housing Commission and City entered into a separate MOU for the City's Temporary Bridge Shelter Programs, which was approved by the Housing Commission Board of Commissioners on November 3, 2017, as well as the Housing Authority and City Council (City Council) on November 14, 2017. On March 20, 2018, the City Council authorized the execution of a First Amendment to the MOU (Resolution R-311627) to also address the duties of the parties concerning the Storage Connect Center (the Center) located at 116 South 20th Street, San Diego, CA 92113. The Housing Commission and City bifurcated the Temporary Bridge Shelter MOU and entered into a separate MOU for the City's Transitional Storage Programs, which was approved by the Housing Commission Board of Commissioners on June 12, 2020, as well as the Housing Authority and City Council on June 16, 2020.

As part of the March 2018 approval, the Housing Commission re-allocated up to \$1,068,743 in funding, which included savings realized on start-up and operating costs of the City's Bridge Shelters, to support the Center. This approval supported the oversight and management of the Center, which helps keep homeless San Diegans' belongings off of downtown streets, sidewalks, and storefronts by providing a safe place for individuals to keep their belongings as they attend to their personal needs, which may include working on housing options, looking for work, attending classes, meeting with service providers, seeking medical care, or other activities such as accessing cleaning or washing facilities. On February 8, 2019, the Housing Commission approved the execution of the first one-year renewal option of the Agreement with Mental Health Systems (MHS) to operate the Center for a term of July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2020, with a corresponding budget of \$1,190,828.40.

The recommendations were presented to the Housing Authority for review on March 12, 2019. The Housing Authority approved the execution of the first one-year renewal option of the Agreement with MHS, contingent on the successful presentation of a plan by the City of San Diego to the City Council, regarding identification of an additional storage center site as well as a proposal for a comprehensive community engagement strategy for the implementation of the identified site. The City of San Diego completed this request and sent a status update Memo to the Council in June 2019. The first one-year renewal option of the Agreement was subsequently executed with MHS.

On June 12, 2020, the Housing Commission approved the execution of the second one-year renewal option of the Agreement with Mental Health Systems (MHS) to operate the Center for a term of July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021, with a corresponding budget of \$1,249,942. On June 11, 2021, the Housing Commission approved the execution of a six-month Non-Competitive Agreement with MHS to operate the Center for a term of July 1, 2021, through December 31, 2021, with a corresponding budget of \$624,971. The Housing Commission awarded the six-month agreement to MHS through a non-competitive process to ensure the continued operation and provision of uninterrupted services for the Center during the pandemic. The Housing Commission determined to temporarily delay the competitive solicitation process known as Request for Proposal (RFP) to increase the number and quality of responses received due to the ongoing strain on staffing resources seen across the homelessness service provider system during the pandemic. The RFP for the Center was released on July 15, 2021, and on September 29, 2021, MHS was notified that their submission for the Transitional Storage Center was recommended for contract award, contingent upon approval by the Housing Commission Board of Commissioners and the Housing Authority.

MONTHLY REPORTING SUMMARY – SEPTEMBER 2021

The tables below provide an overview of data captured in September 2021 for the Center, operated by MHS, which opened on June 13, 2018. The Center is open Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. The Center has seven inventory specialists on staff, including two bilingual inventory specialists, conducting client intakes and storage bin assignments, as well as assisting clients with ongoing access to containers in a supervised staging area. Pursuant to the Housing Authority's approval of the operating Agreement (Resolution No. HA-1777), the Center provides a maximum of 500 storage bins¹ that can be utilized at any given time.

The Center enrolled 49 new clients and served 457 total clients throughout the month of September. Of the 457 clients served in September, 450 of them returned to the Center to access their storage bins, and the total number of return check-ins in September was 2,030. Forty-two clients exited the Center in September.

¹ The Housing Authority and the City Council mandated a maximum of 500 storage units in the March 2018 approval for operation of the Center.

Table One: New Client Enrollments September 2021

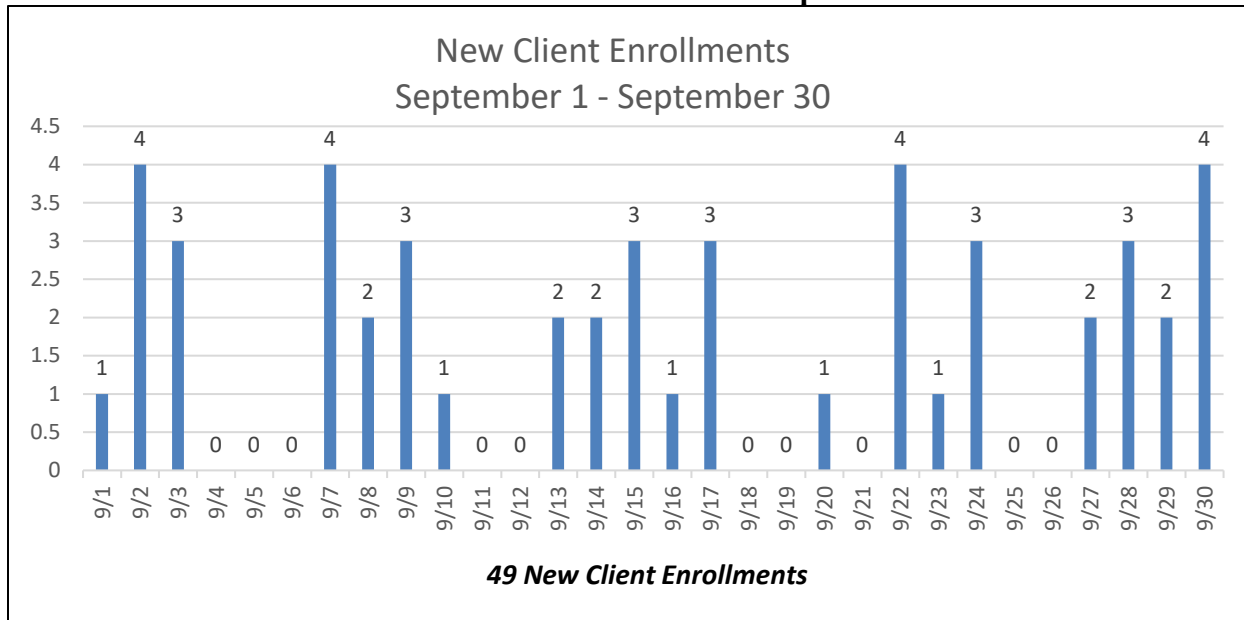


Table Two: Client Return Visits to Access Belongings September 2021

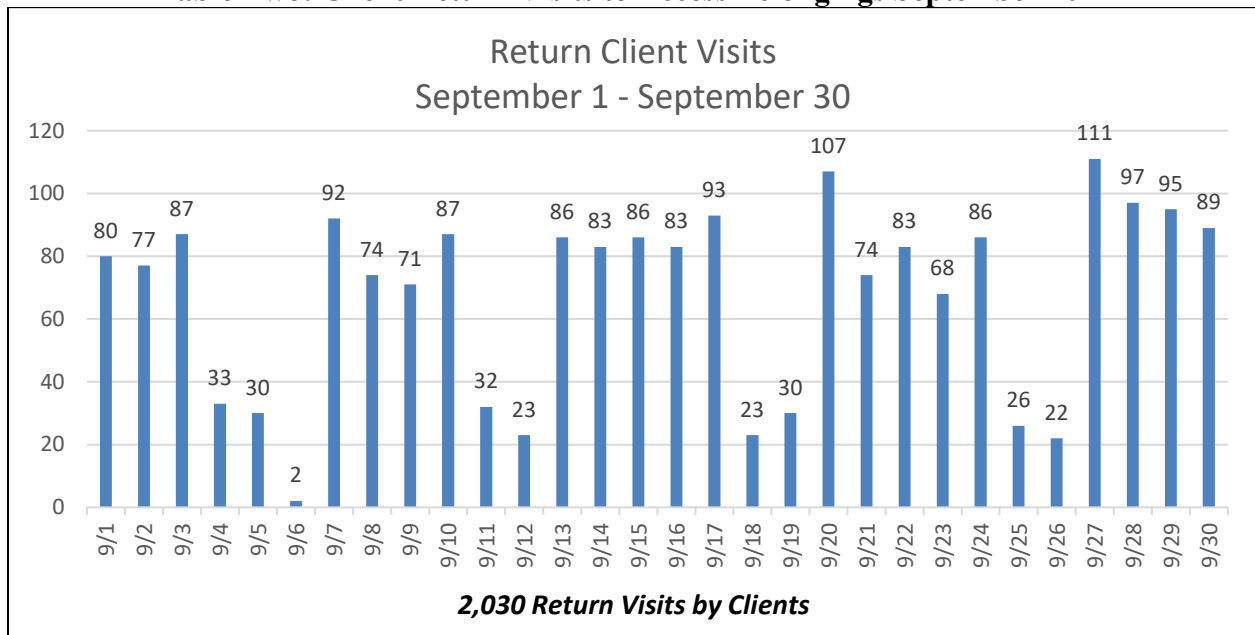


Table Three: Resource Referrals for Enrolled Clients in September 2021

RESOURCE TYPE	TOTAL REFERRALS IN SEPTEMBER
Basic Needs	24
Food Assistance	17
Health Care	6
Shelter	20
Housing Search and Information	23
Income Support and Employment	17
Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Services	4
Transportation	19
At-Risk Homeless Housing Related Assistance Programs	13
TOTAL RESOURCE REFERRALS	143

Table Four: Summary of Weekday and Weekend Check-Ins Fiscal Year 2022

Summary of Check-Ins: July 1, 2021 – September 30, 2021				
	Weekend	Weekday	Saturday	Sunday
July 2021	258	1,656	143	115
August 2021	221	1,677	112	109
September 2021	219	1,811	114	105
Total	698	5,144	369	329
Average Check-Ins	233	1,715	123	110

STORAGE CENTER ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

The Center serves San Diegans experiencing homelessness. Of the 1,712 total distinct, unduplicated persons served in the program since the opening of the Center, 50 percent identified as having a disability, 40 percent experienced chronic homelessness, 31 percent were 55 years of age or older, and 7 percent were veterans.²

Center staff conduct basic outreach activities in the area surrounding the Center. Center staff also act as ambassadors to community members so community members can provide input on areas of need, raise any concerns they may have, and obtain general information about how to contact the facility operator or City services, such as San Diego Police Department (SDPD), Environmental Services Department (ESD), and the Mayor's office or the Housing Commission. In April 2020, Center outreach staff

² Some persons may report more than one indicator of vulnerability.

transitioned to also act as Inventory Specialists to provide needed additional operational support. Inventory Specialists are cross-trained to conduct outreach and rotate schedules during slower times of the day to continue to reach out to individuals experiencing homelessness within the neighboring community and act as ambassadors to community members. The City's Bridge Shelter Outreach teams and the SDPD's Homeless Outreach Team continue to conduct regular outreach activities and provide support to individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness throughout the City, including the neighborhood surrounding the Center.

SDPD coordinates ongoing law enforcement and security presence with the Center's security agency and supports the security company in managing the security needs in the direct vicinity of the site, while SDPD focuses on the surrounding neighborhood.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Prior to the opening of the Center, the operator, MHS, sought the input of residents in the neighborhoods surrounding the Center to ensure a successful partnership with the community. A Community Advisory Committee formed, and a meeting is held monthly with representatives from MHS, the Housing Commission, SDPD, the City's ESD, the Mayor's office and San Diego County Behavioral Health Services in attendance. In June 2021, community members from the neighborhood surrounding Storage Connect Center II, located in the Chollas Creek area, started attending the virtual community meeting. The monthly community meetings now include residents and community members from both Centers. The September 2021 meeting had 21 representatives in attendance. The City of San Diego Mayor's office has recently taken on ongoing facilitation of the meetings.

The meetings provide community members with an opportunity to share their concerns and ideas with MHS, the City, and the Housing Commission, and allow the project's partners to share information and provide updates to the community. In addition, a summary of the meeting is provided on a monthly basis to the Community Advisory Committee as well as City Councilmembers. The Community Meeting Summary for the September 8, 2021, meeting are attached to this report.

The Housing Commission provides a dedicated phone line that community members can utilize to report concerns or ask questions about program operations. MHS, the Housing Commission, and City services will continue to collaborate with the Community Advisory Committee to ensure the Center takes into consideration the needs and expectations of the surrounding community while continuing to serve individuals and families experiencing homelessness in the City of San Diego.

Infectious Disease Mitigation

Beginning in early March 2020, the Housing Commission began sending regular updates to homeless shelters and services providers on ongoing activities of the Regional Task Force on Homelessness (RTFH), the Housing Commission, City of San Diego, and County of San Diego to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 among homeless shelters and services programs and unsheltered populations.

The City of San Diego, RTFH, and Housing Commission staff continue to provide guidance to service providers as needed during this time to support alignment with County Public Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance to protect the health and safety of staff and clients,

which includes symptoms monitoring for staff and customers, requirement of enhanced sanitation and cleaning practices, and utilization of personal protective equipment.

In addition to the mitigation efforts for COVID-19, in October 2021, Center staff implemented education and communication strategies to address the spread of Shigella, a bacterial illness affecting the digestive system. These efforts include educating Clients about Shigella, such as the symptoms, risk factors, how to mitigate the spread of infection, and reporting requirements if tested positive. Other mitigation efforts include posters with information on how to properly wash or clean your hands inside the Client restroom and utilization of hand sanitizing stations. Staff also provide information to Clients verbally, and information is posted on flyers on-site about other infectious diseases, including symptoms, vaccination, prevention and control.

The Housing Commission continues to require service providers to implement enhanced cleaning measures and the continuation of wearing protective masks.

Respectfully submitted,



Lisa Jones
Executive Vice President of Strategic Initiatives
San Diego Housing Commission

Approved by,



Jeff Davis
Deputy Chief Executive Officer
San Diego Housing Commission

Docket materials are available in the “Governance & Legislative Affairs” section of the San Diego Housing Commission website at www.sdhc.org

Storage Connect Center I & II Community Meeting Summary September 8, 2021

Storage Connect Center I (Sherman Heights) Community Member Attendance

1. Myron Taylor
2. Connie Zuniga

Storage Connect Center II (Lea Street) Community Member Attendance

1. Danielle Laman
2. Richard Diaz
3. Elida Chavez
4. Denise Padilla
5. Alex Zukas
6. Lupe Diaz

Storage Connect Center Staff and Affiliated Partner Attendance

1. Stephanie Estrada, Representative for Districts 5, 8 and 9, Mayor Gloria's office
2. Matthew Griffith, Representative for Districts 1, 4 and 7 for Mayor Gloria's Office
3. Stephen Bilecz, Program Manager, Environmental Services, City of San Diego
4. Sarah Nudel, Vice President, Mental Health Systems (MHS)
5. Jennica Valdez, Program Manager, Mental Health Systems (MHS)
6. Veronica Aguilar, Program Manager, Mental Health Systems (MHS)
7. Talia Vukovich, Administrative Assistant, Mental Health Systems (MHS)
8. Melissa Kolts, Senior Programs Analyst, San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC)
9. Jessica Adamo, Housing Programs Manager, San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC)
10. Casey Snell, Director of Housing First Administration, San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC)
11. Officer Tavares- Community Relations Officer with Central Division, San Diego Police Department (SDPD)
12. Shawn Takeuchi, San Diego Police Department (SDPD)
13. Betsy Knight, Behavioral Specialist, Behavioral Health Services (BHS), County of San Diego

Next Community Meeting

Date: Wednesday, October 13, 2021

Time: 5:30-6:30 PM

Location: Virtual/Telephone Conference

<https://sandiego.zoomgov.com/j/1602477486>

Lea Street Community Comments

Community Member Danielle Lehman asked if the questions that were asked at the last meeting will be answered.

SDHC's Melissa Kolts responded that the price per bin for Sherman Heights/Commercial Street (SCCI) for a 12-month period is \$2,500. The price per bin for Lea Street (SCCII) for a 12-month period is \$2,250.

Oak Park Community Member Richard Diaz asked what staff costs for operations. He stated that the Commercial Street location has greater client load has many problems; Lea Street location does not have the same problems. He stated that the workload at Commercial location is so much greater than Lea Street but they have the same operating costs.

SDHC's Melissa Kolts responded that the costs she stated are operating costs, but she will defer to city staff for any non-operating costs. Lea Street employs less staff and is open for fewer hours a week than the Commercial Street location and that is why the price is lower per bin for Lea Street.

Community Member Lupe Diaz asked again about the price per bin.

SDHC's Melissa Kolts stated that the price per bin is determined by the total annual operating budget divided by how many bins are at each site. Lea St currently has 257 bins on site, but can go up to 500 bins. Commercial Street has 500 bins on site. Last fiscal year which is a 12 month period, Commercial Street spent 1.2 million which you divide by 500 bins. Lea Street spent \$580,000 which you divide by 257. Commercial Street has a higher operating budget than Lea Street.

Oak Park Community Member Richard Diaz inquired about how many bins have actually been used and stated that we need to move on onto other questions.

MHS' Jennica Valdez responded that there were 211 out of 257 bins in use as of August 31, 2021, and 214 out of 257 in use as of September 8, 2021.

Community Member Lupe Diaz asked if there are other goals for these programs besides satisfying the city lawsuit or was the second goal to house those individuals and has that goal been met this fiscal year.

MHS' Jennica Valdez responded that the storage centers do not house the individuals. The program provides outreach and linkages to try and help connect individuals to housing services.

SDHC's Casey Snell responded that the Storage Connect Center program is considered supportive services, so it is not direct to housing.

MHS' Veronica Aguilar responded that MHS staff provide storage to homeless individuals with the goal of them being mobile so they can go to employment and housing appointments. MHS staff engage with them and try to connect them to other resources, but the primary goal is to store belongings.

Oak Park Community Member Richard Diaz asked if there is a goal of connecting others to housing and if this data is with SDHC. He stated that SDHC has a lot of other resources to connect clients.

SDHC's Casey Snell responded that SDHC administer homeless services contracts on behalf of the City of San Diego. For information on services, access the SDHC website and community action plans. The link was provided in the chat.

<https://www.sdhc.org/homelessness-solutions/community-action-plan/performance-data/>

Community Member Lupe Diaz inquired about who collects the stats.

MHS' Jennica Valdez responded that MHS staff collect stats when our clients enter the site through a daily log. The daily log and the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) called Clarity provide our data. MHS staff run reports to match MHS internal data to the Clarity system.

Oak Park Community Member Richard Diaz asked about what a regular day of operations looks like at the Lea Street location.

MHS' Jennica Valdez responded that the site does have clients who come in vehicles since some live in their vehicles, and some clients wait at 8 am to access their belongings. Lea Street conducts a lot of intakes from outreach and partnering with other agencies and providing linkages and the site clients from referrals. MHS partner with various programs in the local area, ensuring MHS provides services to homeless individuals in the area and provide resource linkages to clients for other needs. MHS provides storage, but other programs provide different services, such as meals.

City Representative Matt Griffith asked for data clarification on duplicate clients.

MHS' Jennica Valdez explained that some clients may come and check in multiple times per day throughout the month and some clients only checked in once for the month. The "140 clients" on the data sheet refers to single individuals. There were 197 check-ins for the month of August and 140 single individuals were responsible for those check-ins.

Community Member Danielle Laman asked about the nine council districts that have similar programs to help the homeless. She stated she knows there are parking lots for overnight parking to sleep in.

SDHC's Casey Snell asked for clarification from the community member if she is referring to programs funded by the city.

Community Member Danielle Laman responded with asking what is the city doing in each of the council districts.

Community Member Lupe Diaz stated this item that was raised about a year and a half ago and city council was going to go to other neighborhoods to see what they can do. She stated that she has saved a lot of articles about that including when Georgette Gomez was in city council.

Oak Park Community Member Richard Diaz stated that he has a memo from Sarah Jarman where she included all the sites. He states that there were 34 original sites that were all rejected for some reason, then 17 city-owned sites appeared that were immediately rejected. Then Lea Street was selected.

Community Member Denise Padilla asked how many employees work at Lea Street.

MHS' Jennica Valdez responded Lea Street has 7 staff members.

Sherman Heights Community Comments

Community Member Connie Zuniga stated that the community around the Commercial Street location continue to have problems with homeless individuals. She reported that these individuals hassle school staff and there is one individual who exposes himself. The security guard at Jack in the Box intervened and told the individual to leave. Our Lady's School obtained a restraining order on the individual. Our Lady's School is a community of working poor, this school cannot afford to take out a restraining order against homeless individuals over and over. The community member stated her concern over the handwashing station being removed from the area near the storage center. She stated that in 2017, there was a Hepatitis-A outbreak due to unsanitary conditions around homeless encampments. Now the community is facing new variants of COVID-19. The community member stated that she does not accept the handwashing station being removed and she concluded her statement by stating that the contract to MHS to operate the storage center is "outrageously expensive."

City Representative for Mayor Gloria's Office Matt Griffith asked Officer Tavares from SDPD to address the community member's concern.

Community Relations Officer Tavares responded that Father Michael Lee obtained a restraining order and that should help with future mitigation when the individuals comes around as he would violate the restraining order. Officer Tavares stated that having the school post a letter of agency would allow SDPD to

Community Member Connie Zuniga stated that the school cannot afford to go to court time and time again. They simply do not have that kind of money.

Community Relations Officer Tavares for Central Division responded that a "letter of agency" would allow police to enforce laws against persons found on the private property.

Community Member Connie Zuniga asked about the status of jails.

Community Relations Officer Tavares for Central Division responded that county jails have opened again.

Oak Park Community Member Richard Diaz asked SDPD if the individual go to court and has the lawyer argue the individual was not in the state of mind to receive the restraining order.

Community Relations Officer Tavares for Central Division responded that he cannot speak to general court operations, but yes, that scenario is possible.

Community Member Lupe Diaz stated that there is a mental health advocate assigned to the individual in the court. This raises issues for individuals with mental health problems. She stated her curiosity about how the city deals with individuals with mental health issues.

BHS' Betsy Knight responded that the mobile response teams are developing, first in the south county and now north county. Accessing the crisis line is the only way to access the mobile crisis response team.

Community Member Lupe Diaz asked about the role of PERT and stated that there are a lot of chronically homeless people with mental health issues.

Behavioral Health Services Betsy Knight responded that PERT is still around, mobile crisis response option is still available without law enforcement. If you call the access crisis line – 1-888-724-7240- they can tell you if the response team is open in your area. If there is a crisis and someone wants assistance, call that number and a licensed professional will answer to guide the caller. This goes for both mental health and substance use disorder issues.

Community Member Lupe Diaz asked if people should call 911.

Officer Shawn Takeuchi responded that if it is a life-or-death emergency, call 911. If the person is in distress, if they are unable to breathe, then call 911. Possession of narcotics is illegal, but a misdemeanor. If 911 is called for someone injecting drugs, SDPD would only be able to issue them a citation.

Community Member Lupe Diaz commented that she is concerned about high rates of fentanyl overdoses in the county and stated the city needs to address fentanyl overdoses and homelessness. The community member stated that she believes with all the money spent in the city to address homelessness, fentanyl overdoses is not being addressed enough.

Oak Park Community Member Richard Diaz stated that the hand washing stations should be maintained well for the homeless community and should be number one priority.

Community Member Denise Padilla asked who is responsible for the hand washing stations.

MHS' Jennica Valdez responded that environmental services would have a better answer, but she knows you must request a specific location.

Representative for Mayor Gloria's Office Stephanie Estrada stated she is not sure on the specifics.

Representative for Mayor Gloria's Office Matt Griffith stated to provide information to your local council office.

Community Member Lupe Diaz asked if individuals are offered the vaccine when they come to the storage programs.

MHS' Veronica Aguilar responded that staff provide vaccine information to clients for COVID-19 and Hepatitis-A in addition to information posted inside the facility regarding COVID-19 and Hepatitis-A.

Community Member Denise Padilla asked how many employees are at Sherman Heights program.

MHS Veronica Aguilar responded that there are 13 employees. The average is about 2,000 client return visits a month. New intakes can take up to 30-45 minutes, because staff obtains a lot of demographic information and capture a lot of information about clients. A lot of coordination of services is received through HMIS so staff can see where clients are enrolled.

Community Member Connie Zuniga asked if RFPs are being putting out by the city and if there are RFPs in other areas.

Representative for Mayor Gloria's Office Stephanie Estrada responded that the community group did talk about the current RFPs for Lea Street during the last meeting.

Community Member Elida Chavez asked about the RFP and if the storage programs will be operated by MHS again. The community member asked when the RFP process will be over and asked for the budget amount for the next contract term. She asked who is on the election committee and asked about the process for selecting the contractor.

SDHC's Casey Snell responded that the current storage center RFP is under review and SDHC cannot speak to any of the details right now.

Oak Park Community Member Richard Diaz stated he has a big concern about transparency. He asked if SDHC will have presentations by the applicants. He continued to state that one criterion in the RFP is if you have additional methods or ways to improve the current process. The community member asked if applicants be given equal weight.

Community Member Elida Chavez stated that the RFP process is a great concern and the process should be open to everybody and should be multicultural and representative to everybody in the community.

SDHC's Melissa Kolts responded that the meeting has run out of time and SDHC will follow up with the community group regarding the concerns and questions about SDHC's RFP process.

Below is a summary of day-to-day operations for Lea Street as requested by a community member.

Operating Hours:

Monday – Friday: 8am – 5pm

Saturday – Sunday: 8am – 11am

Every day, clients may come in for check ins or new clients may come for intakes. Returning clients come to our site and staff retrieve their bin and inventory sheet form. Clients may remove things from their

bin, add things to their bin, or come by the site to check in without using their bin. Everything clients do is annotated on their inventory sheet form by date, expiration date, action, and client and staff initials. When clients come for intakes, staff complete intake packets with clients and then inventory the items that they put inside their bin. When at site, outreach workers call local programs/agencies to create partnerships. When conducting outreach, outreach workers walk local streets to engage with unsheltered individuals and inform them of our program. Outreach workers also go to local parks to speak to people. Outreach workers go to programs and agencies to inform them of our services and exchange program information. While at the office, staff create outreach reports, work on organizing files, manage their caseload, and contact clients to see if they are available to come to site to update paperwork.