



# Addressing Chronic Homelessness

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9/20/2022

# The Commons on MLK



- One piece of an overall strategic housing plan
- Result of sustained partnership between community and Healthcare stakeholders
- Utilizing Trauma-informed, Housing-First Initiatives
- Strategic location and design planning
- Targeted prioritized populations
- Applied Lessons learned

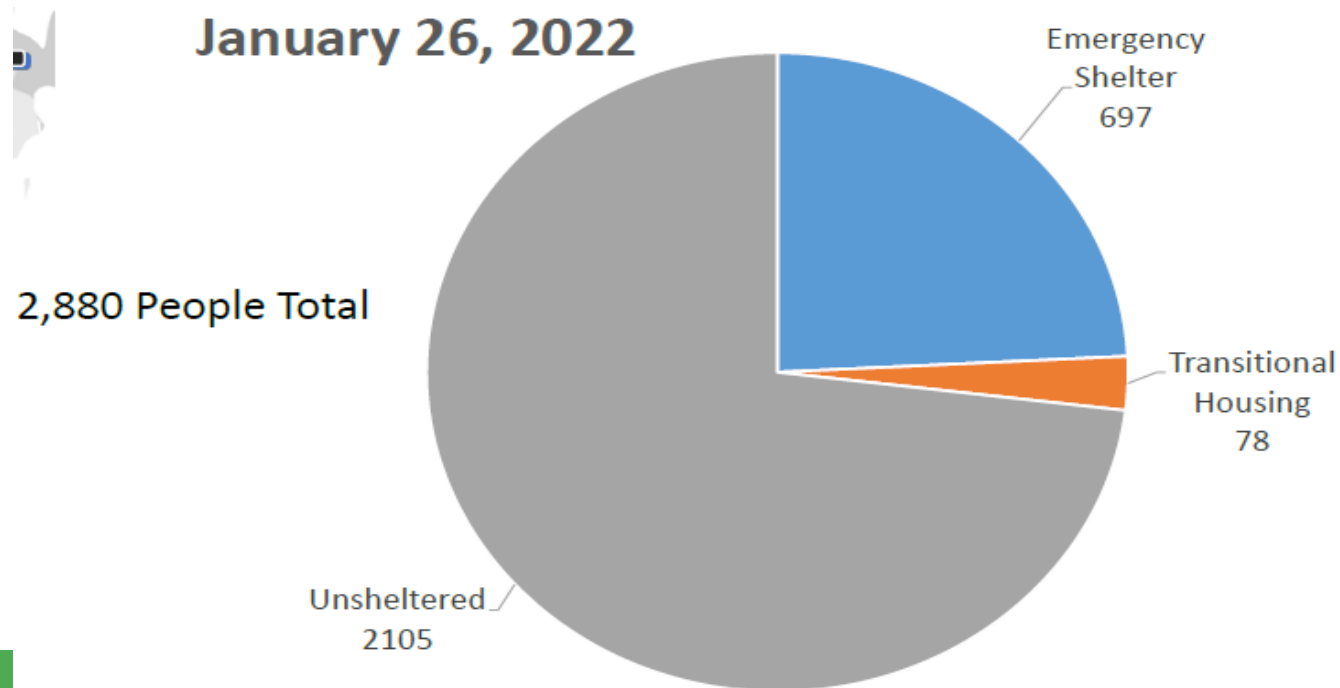
# Strategic Planning



- In 2016, the Housing and Homelessness Board developed a strategic goal:
  - Create 600 additional housing opportunities throughout Lane County by 2021 for chronically homeless individuals and people with particular needs, including: veterans, youth, domestic violence survivors, those with mental illness, drug and alcohol abuse problems, and those exiting criminal justice, foster care and child welfare systems.
- Lane County Health & Human Services provided funding to Homes for Good Housing Agency to conduct feasibility analysis to identify overall feasibility, timing and cost of a Housing First Project in Lane County
- Aligned with Strategic Plans:
  - Lane County Poverty and Homelessness Board Strategic Plan
  - Community Health Improvement Plan
  - Lane County Strategic Plan

# Community Health Improvement Plan

- The Lane County Regional Community Health Improvement Plan aims to encourage and increase safe and affordable housing options within Lane County by improving social and economic opportunities.



# Partnerships Are Key



Housing Is Health Care Coalition:



**KAISER PERMANENTE**



**PacificSource**  
HEALTH PLANS

- Lane County
- Homes For Good
- Sheltercare – on sight resident services
- PeaceHealth
- Trillium Community Health Plan
- Keizer Permanente
- PacificSource



**PeaceHealth**

# Funding the \$13 million Project



Funded through a variety of sources:

- Tax credits
- Federal and local funding
- Private grants

Funders include:

- The City of Eugene
  - Contributed funds and saved the project money by exempting it from the development charge
- Kaiser Permanente Northwest
- PeaceHealth
- Trillium Community Health Plan
- Pacific Health Associates, an organization working with PacificSource
- And many more

# Housing First Initiative

- Housing First initiative:
  - Prioritizing a permanent housing solution for people experiencing homelessness. Immediately ending homelessness, giving the human beings a platform to pursue their personal goals and improve their quality of life
- This was the guide for our partnership
- This approach understands that people need basic necessities like food and a place to live before attending to anything less critical, such as getting a job, budgeting properly, or attending to substance use issues.

**HOUSING  
FIRST**

=



PERMANENT  
HOUSING

+



SUPPORT

# The Commons on MLK

- 51-unit complex with an array of supportive services on Martin Luther King Blvd in Eugene
- The project uses a “housing-first supported housing” model, meaning it provides 24-hour, in-house services for the homeless, and qualification for the housing will not require substantial screenings or sobriety.
- Open to residents in February 2021





# The Commons on MLK



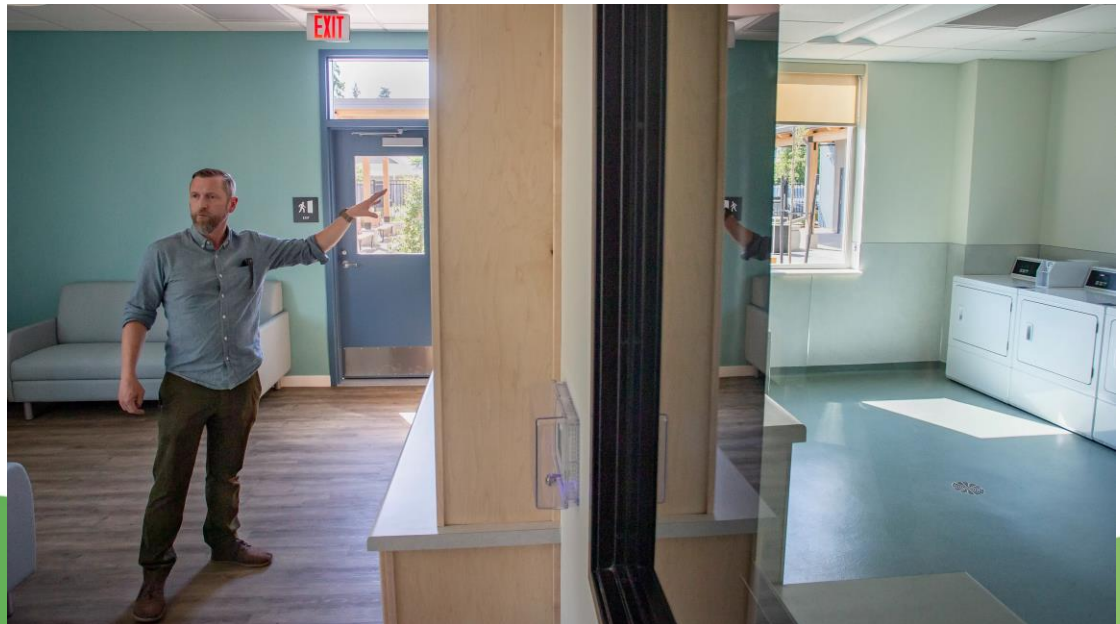
- Goal: To better align some of the most vulnerable members of the community with resources that can improve their living situation.
- ShelterCare provides support services to tenants to help them to stay in housing and achieve their goals related to self-sufficiency.
- Services include behavioral health support, ongoing case management, assisted rent, peer support, and connection to community.



# The Commons on MLK



- The new complex is trauma-informed - Built with the understanding that many of its residents will more likely than not have a history of trauma.
- Located adjacent to Lane County Behavioral Health Campus on MLK as well as Primary Care services through community health centers
- Components of the building such as big windows in corridors, soothing colors on the walls, private rooms for peer support, a courtyard that includes calming water features and visual access to a tree line were added as part of the trauma-informed approach.



# Rent

- How much tenants pay depends on their income.
- The project-based vouchers allow tenants with no income to live rent-free
- Those with an income will pay no more than 30% of their income.
- To qualify for the housing, a potential tenant can only make 50% of the average median income or less.
- The operational cost of the housing and its services largely will be covered by tenants' rent — though not directly, given the population the project is serving.
- All of the units will be subsidized by project-based vouchers, which is federal funding similar to Section 8 vouchers but linked to the housing project rather than the person. Rent for each unit is \$745 including utilities.



# Occupancy



- Placement into The Commons on MLK is done only through referrals from Lane County's Centralized Waitlist.
- A person must be currently living in an emergency shelter, outdoors, in a car or other homeless situation.
- Unlike most property rentals, criminal history or low income do not negatively impact the ability to live there.
- Prioritized Populations:
  - Chronically homeless individuals: This includes people who are currently homeless and have been homeless for 12 or more months in the last three years AND have a disabling condition. A disabling condition is any type of condition or disability that is expected to be long term and that could make it harder to find housing. It does not require that someone has been found eligible for social security disability or supplemental security income (SSDI or SSI)
  - Those who participate in the FUSE program or who are high utilizers of crisis systems such as the jail and hospital emergency room.

# FUSE

## Frequent User Service Engagement



- Trillium works with Lane County and Sheltercare to help break the cycle of housing instability, homelessness and crisis among individuals with complex Behavioral health challenges who are frequent users of emergency services
- On average, FUSE participants have been homeless for 7 years during their current episode of homelessness
- Comparison of utilization before and after start of engagement in street outreach shows:
  - Overall cost decrease by 53%
  - ED utilization decreased by 26%
  - Inpatient stays decreased by 55%
  - Behavioral healthcare utilization decreased 14%, an unexpected outcome

# FUSE

## Frequent User Service Engagement



Hear from a Member:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d-me2B-Nsp8>

# Ongoing work



- The Keystone
  - A 15-unit development to provide Permanent Supportive Housing to chronically homeless families in Eugene
- The Nell
  - 45-unit development for people experiencing homelessness
- Navigation Center - Opened last month
  - A 75-bed low barrier housing shelter
  - Access documentation and supports to transition into housing successfully

# Takeaways



- Sustained community partnerships
- Evidence-based strategic planning
- Need for sustainable, ongoing supports and services