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Transitional Center for Civic Center Homeless Readied for Opening *Comprehensive Civic Center Survey Released*

Two contracts for the operation of a round-the-clock transitional center with emergency shelter beds and enhanced services will be considered Tuesday by the Orange County Board of Supervisors for the former Santa Ana Transit Terminal, which has been renamed "The Courtyard."

The plan to use the former terminal was proposed by [Supervisor Andrew Do](#) at a special Board meeting earlier this month, with a directive to open the center within 30 days providing access to showers, food programs, storage and comprehensive service referrals. Public restrooms have been available at the former bus terminal since 2009; in August, the County installed additional portable toilets.

"We set an ambitious goal to have this shelter up-and-running within 30 days," said Supervisor Do, whose First District includes Santa Ana. "Midnight Mission is the right operator to run this shelter that will get people off the streets and onto a productive path to self-sufficiency."

He added, "Our homeless population, many of whom are veterans that honorably served our country, deserve our attention and a helping hand up."

The operation and service coordination contracts with The Midnight Mission and Kingdom Causes Inc., also known as City Net, call for expanded services to be available at The Courtyard beginning the week of October 1 for those who have congregated in the Civic Center. The estimated cost to operate the center is \$1.4 million for a year.

"This is a start to a larger effort to identify ways to help those in the Civic Center without a home to find permanent shelter and to create a safe space for people to rebuild their lives," Board [Chairwoman Lisa Bartlett](#), Fifth District, said.

"Homelessness is a complex problem. It hurts those who are living on the streets and their families, and it causes serious concerns about public health and safety," said Board [Vice Chair Michelle Steel](#). "We are committed to doing what we can to work with city governments, non-profits and local communities to reduce the number of people living unsheltered on the street and to improve life for all Orange County residents" said Vice Chair Steel, Second District.

[Supervisor Shawn Nelson](#) urged his Board colleagues earlier this month to create a more permanent location for homeless services in Santa Ana in addition to the temporary opening of The Courtyard. "We can and should have this facility up now but this is not an answer to

anything long-term," said Supervisor Nelson, Fourth District. "We need to take ownership of our own destiny and find a more permanent solution."

[Supervisor Todd Spitzer](#) said the Board must consider additional alternatives for assisting those without permanent housing, including creating a possible "campus" style cluster of buildings and shelter space with services including drug and alcohol detox, mental health services, job training and access to permanent housing such as the national best practices model in San Antonio, Texas, and Phoenix, Arizona.

"We need something above and beyond the steps we've taken," said Supervisor Spitzer, Third District. "After recently touring a national best practices model in San Antonio, I'm looking forward to having a comprehensive discussion about how the County's effort should piece together to provide services in a more permanent and efficient way."

A recently completed survey by County staff and non-profit organization volunteers found 461 people who said they were living permanently in the Civic Center, a 13% increase over a survey conducted at the same time last year. Among other findings:

- The bulk those surveyed – 57% -- said their last permanent residence was Santa Ana.
- Four in 10 people said they had been living in the Civic Center for less than a year.
- Two-thirds said they are receiving Medi-Cal and CalFresh benefits (food stamps).
- The reasons people cited most for why they were living in the Civic Center: a sense of community, the availability of free food and lack of housing.

A copy of the 2016 Orange County Civic Center Homeless Survey can be found here:

<http://ochealthinfo.com/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?BlobID=58117>

More information on Tuesday's meeting and the proposed contracts can be found here (click on Revisions and Supplemental Agenda Items):

<http://ocgov.com/gov/bos/agenda>

The Courtyard is only one component of a larger network of services to assist those without permanent housing. Two weeks ago, the Board of Supervisors selected Mercy House Living Centers Inc. to operate a new 200-bed year-round emergency shelter and multi-service center in Anaheim, as well as operate seasonal cold-weather shelters at National Guard armories in Fullerton and Santa Ana.

The County paid \$4.25 million for the 24,384 square-foot industrial warehouse and 12,842 square feet of office space, situated on about 1.87 acres with 68 parking spaces. The cities of Anaheim and Fullerton contributed \$500,000 each toward the project, with \$100,000 coming from the city of Brea.

The County has operated a seasonal armory shelter program in Fullerton and Santa Ana for the past 28 years. However, the armories are only open part of the year and only at night. The Fullerton armory program is slated to be discontinued when the Anaheim service center opens.

More information on the new emergency shelter in Anaheim and the cold-weather armory program can be found here:

<https://cms.ocgov.com/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?BlobID=57754>

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