

**ASHLAND CITY COUNCIL
STUDY SESSION MINUTES
Monday, November 18, 2024**

Mayor Graham called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Mayor Graham and Councilors Hyatt, Dahle, DuQuenne, Bloom, Hansen, and Kaplan were present.

I. Public Input

(15 minutes – Public input or comment on City business not included on the agenda)
None

II. Homeless Services Assessment Report Implementation Update

Brandon Goldman, Community Development Director and Linda Reid, Housing Coordinator, provided a presentation (see attached). Actions taken by the city include: trash bins, weed abatement, laundry and shower services, inclement weather shelters and respite centers, regional collaboration through Jackson County Continuum of Care (JCCC), public restroom access, APD substation in South Ashland, Dusk to Dawn night lawn, proposed ELEA (Enhanced Law Enforcement Area) in South Ashland, Livability team-like model with Ashland Police, and developing a Homeless Services page on city's website. The five main areas of concern include livability improvements, access to resources, enhanced partnerships and outreach, basic needs facilities, and shelter and transitional housing options. Goldman spoke that Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds may potentially be used towards such projects and a previously allocated provisional award may go unused could be reallocated. Discussion occurred regarding how to best support and collaborate with community partners to provide services. Current funding for administrative expenses for JCCC is through an emergency order that extended into the current fiscal year, but future funding is uncertain. Graham polled the Council by a show of thumb up, down, or sideways to indicate priorities for possible actions and discussion occurred regarding how to prioritize each topic:

Providing bathroom access on the south side – high priority

Provide multiple locations for electronics charging and Wi-Fi access – moderate interest

Develop a daytime lockable storage program – high priority

Strengthen partnerships between law enforcement, social service agencies, and volunteers with a Livability team-like model– high priority but ties into next topic/discussion and hiring a Homeless Services Coordinator.

Expand access to showers and laundry facilities – hold for future discussion

Create a day center/respite from outdoors – hold for next topic and future discussion

Establish a housing-focused transitional shelter – hold for next topic and future discussion

Expand street outreach services – high priority and also ties into partnerships

Direction given to staff to implement action steps by prioritizing restroom accessibility, daytime storage, wi-fi/charging accessibility, partnerships and outreach, and move forward with a Homeless Services Coordinator with a report back to Council within 6 months.

III. 2200 Ashland Street Master Plan Ad Hoc Committee Recommendations

Jan Calvin, 2200 Ashland Street Ad Hoc Committee Consultant, and Trina Sanford, committee member, spoke about the charge of the committee to develop a Master Plan for the use of 2200 Ashland Street to support homeless services including site use, facility design, and funding for site improvements and operations. Preidentified uses include use as a severe weather, smoke, and emergency shelter with recommendations for professional staff and volunteers to ensure safety for people and their belongings and access without an appointment. Recommendations for indoor day services including laundry, showers, day storage, and social service providers by appointment. A professionally managed and outcome oriented transitional housing program with case management and bridge housing was also recommended for site use. Facility considerations for this recommendation include boarding rooms in existing building, an on-site tiny home village, and multi-floor efficiency apartments. Also recommended were limited office space for meetings and administrative functions of partner organizations providing homeless services, adequate indoor restrooms, enclosure for outdoor trash/recycling, bicycle racks, informational signage, and low-impact night lighting. Recommendations for prohibited use include camping (tents, cars, or other vehicles), drop-in services (except when used as severe weather shelter), low barrier or congregate shelter (except when used as severe weather shelter), non-private porta-potties, service trailers, and pallet houses. Recommendations for maintenance include fencing and landscape improvements.

Council discussed the need to bring up the facility to code for use as a severe weather shelter and inquired about viable funding options to accomplish that. City Manager Sabrina Cotta explained how CBDG funds may be used. Cotta spoke that other options include reallocation of funds currently devoted to renovation of the Community Center or waiting until the next budget cycle.

Calvin spoke of the committee's recommendation that the City provide ongoing contract management for program providers at the site. Other recommendations include forming a standing advisory committee and filling a staff position. Hansen asked what role the committee saw for this position and how it would interact with a standing committee. Calvin responded the position would not provide the services, but rather coordinate services while interfacing with community partners and the committee. Graham asked how setting appointments would work for this population. Calvin responded this is something the committee would work on as a client-driven process. Sanford clarified that appointments would not apply to severe weather or emergency shelter use.

Public Comment

Alexandra Reid/Ashland – spoke appreciation for including laundry services. Supports volunteer community program called Laundry of Love that has received a commitment for five commercial-grade washers and dryers but needs space such as at 2200 Ashland St.

Councilors spoke that future councils may have different priorities and highlighted the need to proceed carefully to ensure long-term success and of the need for appropriate funding to remain attached to recommended actions. Each Council member and Mayor Graham expressed appreciation for all of the hard work the committee did, and the plan presented.

IV. Adjournment of Study Session

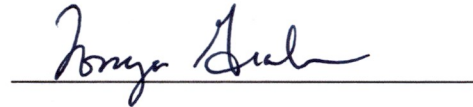
The meeting was adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:



City Recorder Alissa Kolodzinski

Attest:



Mayor Tonya Graham



Homeless Services Masterplan Assessment Report Follow-up

City Council, Study Session
November 18, 2024

Follow-Up Requested by Council (plus one other thing)

- Develop a prioritized list of actions based on timeframe for implementation.
- Provide an overview of current actions being undertaken by the City.
- Outline potential resources available to address short term needs.

Five Areas of Concern Identified in the HSAR

- . Livability Improvements
- . Access to Resources
- . Enhanced Partnerships and Outreach
- . Basic Needs Facilities
- . Shelter and Transitional Housing Options

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Actions Currently Being Undertaken by the City

- Trash Receptacle Deployment and Weed Abatement
- Supporting Laundry and Shower Services
- Inclement Weather Shelters and Respite Centers
- Regional Collaboration
- Public Restroom Access
- APD Substation at Albertson's Shopping Complex
- Designated nightly campsite (Dusk to Dawn)
- Extension of the Enhanced Law Enforcement Area (ELEA) to Ashland Street
- Establishment of a livability team like model
- Beautification Grants
- Customer Response Module on the City Website

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1.Triage and Manage Homelessness-Immediate Actions to address Pressing Issues				
Implementation Timeline	Action Item Addressed	Description	What the City is already doing/Existing community resources to address this action	Considerations
Short Term	A	Respond to community livability concerns, particularly in south Ashland; clean up unsightly areas, provide more trash receptacles and weed abatement	APD substation Albertson's shopping complex, development of ELEA on Ashland Street in progress, trash can deployment Ashland Street est. October, Weed abatement process in revisions for next season, deploying customer response module on website. (beautification grants offered throughout town?). The City recently acquired a property on which to build a park on the South end of the City. The plans for the park include a bathroom facility.	Addressed Below.
Short Term/Medium Term	B	Strengthen partnerships between law enforcement, social service agencies, and volunteers to connect people with help and support	Housing program staff, City Council liaison are already engaging in regional collaboration through the Jackson County Continuum of Care.	APD could consider, hosting, or having a representative attend regular meetings to coordinate and communicate with community partners who are serving people experiencing homelessness-this could be accomplished quickly. The establishment of a livability team model in Ashland would require consideration for impacts and costs to staff
Short Term	C, D,E, F,G	These actions all address resource needs: restrooms, showers, laundry facilities, wi-fi access, device charging, storage, respite, shelter, and connection to resources	C. There are a few locations that offer free access to wi-fi throughout the City, and some electrical outlets that are accessible to the public, some of these are provided by the City and some are provided by other institutions, such as OHRA, and SOU and some commercial enterprises such as Starbucks. D. The City has a porta potty behind the plaza and one at the Night law behind City Hall. Garfield park and the night lawn have water resources including a water bottle filling station. E, F, & G. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the City has supported the OHRA laundry/shower trailer with funding and sometimes a location for operations. For many years Laundry Love operated out of a commercial laundromat, and most recently laundry love has been operating out of the OHRA laundry shower trailer. The City has not traditionally provided funding or other resources to Laundry Love. The City continues to support the opening of inclement weather shelters and smoke and cooling respite centers. The City dedicates funding, staff time, and now a city owned building to this effort.	The City could utilize the 2200 Ashland street center as a charging station and offer wi-fi access to those utilizing laundry, shower, and/or navigation services. If the City allowed regular community meals as that location it could also serve as a regular wi-fi, charging resources for people experiencing homelessness in the community. The City might consider the addition of public restrooms available on the South Side of town specifically. RVTd assisted the City of Medford with the installation of a "Portland loo" type of bathroom at the transfer station. There may also be an opportunity to partner with RVTd to install a bathroom on a highly utilized bus stop. The City could look for funding/utilize CDBG funding to remodel the 2200 Ashland street shelter building to include laundry and shower facilities. These facilities could be utilized to provide showers to shelter occupants, as well as to provide showers and laundry services on a weekly basis as a part of a broader outreach approach that may or may not include services to connect people experiencing homelessness to resources to move them out of homelessness. Storage could be added at the 2200 ashland Street location, and a partner could be found to oversee the use of them.

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2. Support Pathways from Homelessness to Housing				
Short Term-ongoing	A, B, C, D, E	Much of these goals will be undertaken by partner organizations with the City primarily taking on a supportive role, either providing facilitation or funding, and potentially some staff support. Actions in this category include: expand street outreach services; professional development, skill building for front line service providers, outcome tracking, housing focused shelter, case management and other wrap around services to remove barriers to housing/housing retention.	For many years the City has supported the OHRA Center, the OHRA laundry shower trailer and providers of community meals. APD currently conducts the most robust street outreach in the City. The City does not engage directly in housing placement or retention, but rather supports the work of the CoC which institutionalizes the system for tracking populations, outcomes and intervention efficacy. The City does not generally provide professional development, education or skill building programs for community partners	In prior years, the City has provided funding to social service organizations to conduct targeted street outreach. The City could continue to support street outreach services through grant funds or directly for specific activities. The livability team model could also be considered. The City could provide funding to the CoC to support administration of the homeless response system. The City could create, expand, or prioritize the funding of capacity building grants for professional development, lastly, the City could provide funding or advocacy for the expansion of rapid rehousing funding/programs.
3. Create Long Term Change				
Short Term-ongoing	A,B,C,D,E	These goals primarily address issues generally undertaken by partner organizations such as public health, mental health, advocacy, livability, community-building, countywide strategic planning, local strategic planning, Housing Production Strategy implementation.	The City supports the work of the Jackson County CoC through the dedication of staff time and staff involvement. In previous years the City has provided funding to support the administration of the CoC program. The CoC is currently engaged in a strategic planning process as well as developing a gaps analysis. Similarly the City has been and continues to be engaged in strategic planning efforts at a local level. APD substation Albertson's shopping complex, development of ELEA on Ashland Street in progress, trash can deployment Ashland Street est. October, Weed abatement process in revisions for next season, deploying customer response module on website. The City already engages in numerous community engagement activities to encourage community building.	Leverage existing city maintenance teams and volunteer groups. The City could consider providing grant funding for supporting the development of leaders in traditionally underserved communities, to help them to better engage in public process. The City could consider supporting a volunteer or paid program similar to the Miracle messages, to help reconnect homeless people to their loved ones, and thereby facilitate social connectedness and disrupt isolationism. https://www.miraclemessages.org/
4. Maximize Resources				
Short Term-ongoing	A,B	These actions address advocacy for federal and state funding to address homelessness.	The City belongs to League of Oregon Cities who lobbies and advocates for policies and funding to address community needs.	Allocate staff time for research and lobbying, or hire lobbyist develop advocacy strategies and raise awareness.
	C,D E	These actions address increasing funding through grant writing/assistance with grant writing for non-profits See 2. A and 3. C	City retains EVAN BROOKS for grant writing service and can utilize for grants around homelessness.	Employ grant writer, or train staff for grant writing. Provide funding to support grant writers for non-profits or provide funding to support grant writing trainings for provider staff. Support efforts to provide professional development with funding or sponsorships.

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5. Foster Public Engagement				
Short-Term	A,B,C	Strengthen methods for community engagement and information sharing about issues of homelessness in Ashland. Promote volunteer opportunities available with homeless services programs. Establish a "community donations portal" for donor-directed contributions to a wide range of homeless services.	City Advisory Committees and specifically, the Housing and Human Services Advisory Committee plans and hosts focus groups, and other community engagement events to gather feedback, explore new ideas, and identify resources to inform the City of community sentiment on specific housing and human services related topics.	The City could create a homeless services page where information about programs and opportunities for community engagement and volunteering could be linked or posted. A homeless services page would be quick and easy to set up and post. The homeless services page can provide a link to the CoC page. The City could provide funding for and/or host events.
Ongoing	D	Host focus groups to gather feedback, explore new ideas, and identify hidden resources.	Same as above	Same as above
6. Form Strategic Alliances				
Ongoing	A,B	Strengthen City of Ashland participation in the Jackson County Continuum of Care.: Leverage existing relationships (intergovernmental, economic, social, etc.) to increase communication, coordination, and collaboration around issues of homelessness.	City Staff (Housing Program) and City Council are both members of the CoC, with City staff serving on the board and a City Councilor serving on a workgroup.	See 2, A and 3, C While there is a critical lack of resources in the Ashland community, some resources have some limited availability through outreach or the OHRA navigation services, often having office hours at partner agency locations. The City could utilize the 2200 Ashland Street location to offer space for community partners to meet with people locally.
	C	Facilitate coordination of current health service providers (e.g. Max's Mission, ACCESS, JCMH, La Clinica, HIV Alliance, Pathfinders/other peer support); host mini summits.	Staff time, political support and will. Housing Program staff, and the HHSAC provides some funding and coordination with health service providers. Housing Program staff, and the HHSAC provides some funding and coordination with health service providers.	
Short term/long-term	D	Convene an interdepartmental team to keep pace with and address issues of homelessness in Ashland.	Not currently happening	Assign staff from various departments. Meet regularly to coordinate. Livability team has been discussed and explored- pending. Interdepartmental meetings could be scheduled in the short term. Establishing a livability team model is a longer-term effort.
7. Continue to Learn and Educate				
Ongoing	A,C,D	Keep pace with federal and state priorities. Provide and collect relevant data, analyze trends, and monitor the performance of the homeless services system, as well as individual programs. Continuously learn about what works and what doesn't - and seek to understand why.	See 4, A and B	
	B	Convene, sponsor, and otherwise expand access to professional development courses for frontline staff, such as Motivational Interviewing techniques, trauma informed practices, equity, and cultural responsiveness	See 6, A and B	

Questions or Comments?



2200 Ashland St. Master Plan Ad hoc Committee Report

City Council Study Session
November 18, 2024

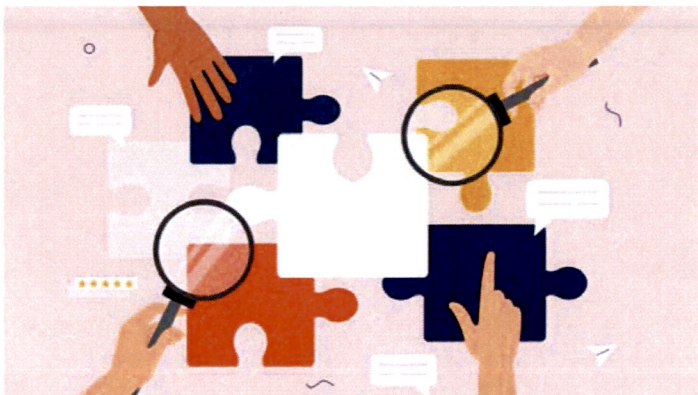
The Ad hoc Committee

Voting Members

- Jason Houk
- Rachel Jones
- Matthew McMillan
- Debbie Neisewander
- Avram Sacks
- Trina Sanford
- Allison Wildman

Council Liaisons

- Tonya Graham, Mayor
- Gina DuQuenne, City Councilor
- Bob Kaplan, City Councilor



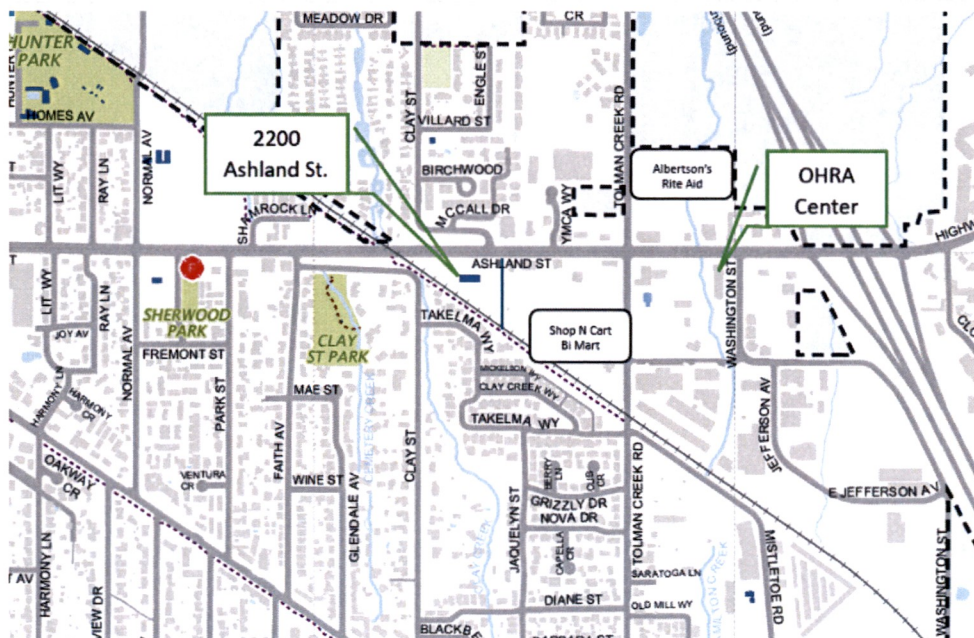
The Charge

Develop a master plan for use of the 2200 Ashland St. property that

1. Provides services to people experiencing homelessness
2. Furthers the community's goals regarding homeless services and affordable housing
3. Enhances the experience of the surrounding neighborhood

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The Site and Surrounding Area



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June-November

Discovery Phase

Identify service needs, neighborhood challenges, state expectations, and zoning and building codes

Recommendations Phase

Develop and share draft recommendations with the community; and incorporate feedback

Submit recommendations to City Council

Options Phase

Investigate traditional and innovative solutions

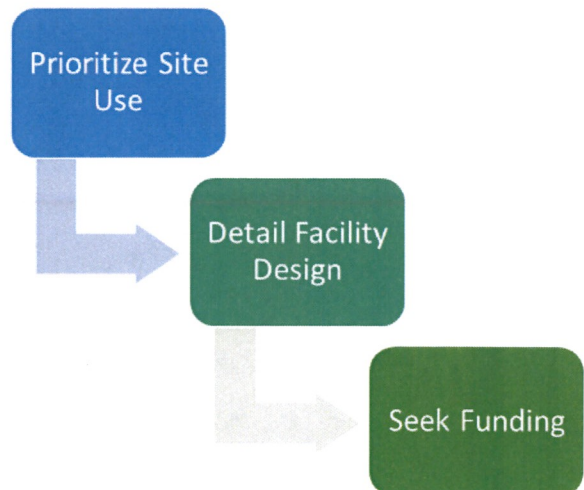


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The Role of the Master Plan

Provides a foundation to

- Prioritize site use
- Create a detailed facility design, from which cost estimates can be determined
- Seek funding for site improvements and program operations



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In Context

The 2200 Ashland St. Master Plan is...

Only a small part of what is needed to address and prevent homelessness in Ashland and the surrounding region.

The need is much greater than can be met on this property.

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Pre-Identified Use

- Severe Weather / Smoke Shelter
- Available as a community space in case of emergencies



Additional Uses should...



Serve

Serve people experiencing homelessness, beyond just a severe weather shelter

Other basic needs

Pathways to housing security and self-sufficiency



Impact

Make a meaningful and measurable impact to improve people's lives

Not foster negative impacts on the surrounding area



Include

Include communication pathways and collaborative partnerships to mitigate any emerging issues

Promote a shared sense of community

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A Different Sort of Master Plan

A property master plan is typically about brick and mortar.

Creating a master plan for a property dedicated to a complex social issue can be a very different thing.



Recommendations

for a Master Plan that a) provides services to people experiencing homelessness and b) enhances the surrounding area

1. Site Use
2. Site Management
3. Other Considerations

Site Use

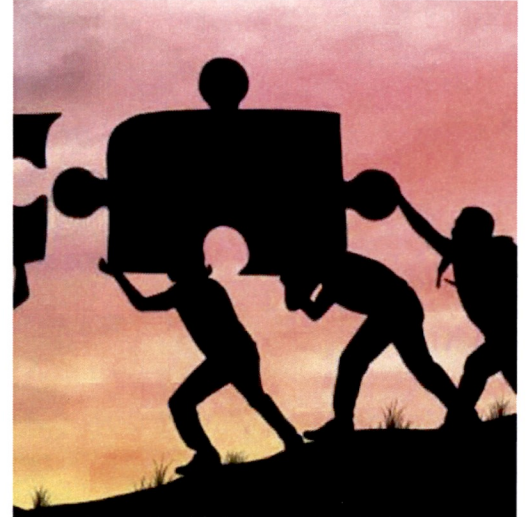
1. Severe Weather/Smoke Shelter
 - Safety and security for people and their belongings
 - Professional staff & volunteers
 - Access without an appointment
2. Indoor day services by appointment
 - Appointments with social service providers
 - Laundry
 - Showers
 - Day storage



Site Use (cont.)

3. Transitional Housing

- Professionally managed
- Outcome oriented
- Transitional Housing program with case management (up to 24 months)
- Bridge Housing (6-9 months)



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Facilities for Transitional Housing

- **Boarding Rooms** in the existing building.
- **Tiny Home Village**, where individuals or couples can reside in self-contained tiny homes, complete with bathrooms and kitchens.
- **Multi-floor Efficiency Apartments**, also for individuals or couples, but making for more efficient use of the space.



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The Site shall also allow...

- Scheduling of appropriate space for **training and meetings related to housing and homeless services**
- A limited number of **office spaces for administrative use by organizations addressing housing and homeless issues**



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Other Features / Amenities

- **Multipurpose space**, that can be used for classes and meetings, as well as activities in response to a community emergency
- An adequate number of **indoor restrooms** to meet the needs for use, including the Severe Weather/Smoke Shelter
- Visually appealing **screening/enclosure of outdoor recycling or garbage bins**
- **Bicycle racks**
- **Informational signage**
- **Low-impact night lighting**



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Prohibited Uses

The 2200 Ashland St. Master Plan states **the site shall not include:**

- Camping (including tents, cars, or other vehicles)
- Low-barrier and/or congregate shelter*
- Drop-in services*
- Porta-potties that are not fully screened and roofed
- Service trailers
- Pallet houses

** Except in the case of the Severe Weather/Smoke Shelter*

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Maintenance

- The property shall be fenced and well-maintained.
- The detailed Facility Plan shall include appropriate placement of additional trees, as well as upgraded fire-safe landscaping.
- Weed abatement and other weekly maintenance shall ensure that the property is visually appealing, in keeping with the standards of other City buildings and properties.



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1. That the City provide strong and continuous contract management for program providers

- Policies and procedures
- Provider standards
- Provider performance
- Client/program outcomes

2. Best practices in social services; client "bill of rights"

3. Client evaluation for appropriate services

4. Site rules, code of conduct, behavior contract

5. Advisory Committee

Other Considerations

1. Services at 2200 Ashland St. shall be **coordinated with and complement other resources** throughout the region
2. Implement other promising actions to help resolve/reduce homelessness, **without further concentrating homeless services in south Ashland**
3. Fill the Council-approved **staff position** to assist the City in advancing a coordinated and well-articulated approach to homelessness services, including supporting implementation of the recommendations in the plan



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Other Considerations (cont.)

To expedite implementation, extend or otherwise re-charter the 2200 Ashland St. Master Plan Ad hoc Committee to assist with

1. The Site Plan Design
2. A checklist for program and site management policies
3. A client “bill of rights,” code of conduct, and behavior contract
4. A set of site rules
5. The role of an ongoing Advisory Committee
6. Components of a communications and engagement plan for use with key stakeholders, including those in the surrounding area and potential clients to be served on site
7. Interim use of the site



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***Well-planned and well-managed efforts can
create positive outcomes for everyone.***

Questions or Comments?