



EMBARCADERO SAFE NAVIGATION CENTER ADVISORY GROUP (ESNCAG) MEETING NOTES

*Wednesday, March 25, 2020
Virtual Webinar Meeting
5:30 pm*

Embarcadero SAFE Navigation Center Advisory Group (ESNCAG) Members Present:

Alice Rogers, South Beach/Rincon/Mission Bay Neighborhood Association
 Andrew Robinson, East Cut Community Benefit District
 Courtney McDonald, Office of Supervisor Matt Haney
 Emily Cohen, Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH)
 Katy Liddell, The Portside Homeowners Association
 Mahesh Khatwani, The Watermark Homeowners Association
 Marc Dragun, The Brannan Homeowners Association
 Patricia Fox, Bayside Village
 Rick Dickerson, Maynard Rich Management
 Steve Good, Executive Director of Five Keys
 Captain Tim Falvey, San Francisco Police Department (SFPD)
 Toby Levine, Central Waterfront Advisory Group

Additional City Representatives Present:

Randy Quezada, Port of San Francisco

ESNCAG Members Absent:¹

Art Aguilar, Google
 Guillermo Perez, San Francisco Public Works
 Joe Reilly, Port of San Francisco
 Sue Bushnell, The 301 Bryant Street Home Owners Association

Download the accompanying meeting PowerPoint here:

<https://sfport.com/meeting/embarcadero-safe-navigation-center-advisory-group-march-25-2020-supporting-documents>

1. Welcome, Meeting Objectives, and Updates

- Rick Dickerson (ESNCAG Chair) and Alice Rogers (Vice Chair) welcomed everyone and reviewed the meeting objectives and public participation opportunities.
- Emily Lisker (Controller's Office) reviewed feedback from February's meeting, reviewed ground rules for the webinar meeting, and welcomed everyone to this meeting.

¹ Please note that some of these members may have in fact been present on the call.

- Emily Cohen (HSH) provided an update on the City’s COVID-19 response and thanks to the entire community and City staff for all the work being done to stay safe and work proactively to keep people safe. See slide 5 in the [presentation](#). Key updates shared included:
 - HSH is working 150% time and effort on the COVID-19 crisis.
 - At this time, the City is no longer accepting new referrals into shelters and Navigation Centers in order to limit the spread of COVID-19 into congregate environments, including shelters, single room occupancy hotels, and supportive housing. This is designed to keep guests and staff safe. The City is simultaneously working to identify and secure new housing for people across the City (hotels and other housing) to enable folks to shelter inside in private settings.
 - Implemented temporary adjustments to the extension policy for all reservations across shelters and Navigation Centers so no one is “timed out” of a shelter placement during this crisis.
 - Asked all shelters to be open 24/7 so all can shelter in place.
 - A moratorium on residential evictions to help prevent individuals and families from becoming homeless during the crisis.
 - See the COVID-19 Updates section on the [HSH website](#) and the COVID-19 and people experiencing homelessness section on the [City’s website](#) for more information.

2. Review of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Amendment Decision from the Port

Emily Cohen reviewed the Port Commission’s decision to amend the MOU for the Embarcadero SAFE Navigation Center and shared how it will affect operations and outreach. See slide 7 in the presentation. Key updates included:

- The MOU amendment creates **the option** for the City to increase capacity at the Embarcadero SAFE Navigation Center in order to respond to COVID-19, i.e., to shelter more individuals who do not have COVID-19 and do not have symptoms to keep them safe.
- After the Port Commission amended the MOU, the Department of Public Health and the City’s Emergency Operations Center (EOC) offered new guidance to pause any increases in capacity in order to stabilize the community and not introduce additional individuals into congregate settings.
- Therefore, the City has paused any plans to expand the Center right now, but that may change in the future as public health guidance evolves. This amendment just opened up the possibility to expand these beds more rapidly to respond to the COVID outbreak in the future.

Emily Cohen also reminded the Advisory Group and community members of the key MOU requirements. She clarified that the MOU does not have any prerequisites or performance metrics that need to be met in order to expand the number of beds in operation. There are requirements tied to the extension of the site beyond the first two-year period. These requirements are listed on slide 8 in the presentation.

3. Data Report-Outs

- Emily Cohen presented data from the Navigation Center as she transitioned this week to HSH's Interim Director of External Affairs, as Abigail Stewart-Kahn is now the Interim Director of the Department. [See full data report here](#). Key highlights shared from the report out included:
 - Intakes into the Center have slowed as we reached capacity at 130 beds.
 - Most intakes are still from the immediate Outreach Zone.
 - It is still early to calculate average length of stay, but that is also shown on the dashboard.
 - Problem Solving Placements are the vast majority of guests, and HSH is actively working on strategies with these guests to problem solve and prevent homelessness.
 - 3% of the guests who have stayed are in the higher vulnerability group eligible for permanent supportive housing.
 - There is not yet enough data to calculate exit data. COVID 19 response may impact that data availability.
- Captain Falvey shared the updated police incident data. See [full data report here](#). Key updates included:
 - Crime was down again in February, both a decrease from January and lower than the previous two years during the same period.
 - The malicious mischief crime category is slightly up, and noted that they found some stealing catalytic converters off cars which is included here.
 - They have received emails about the Catacombs and officers have been very responsive to that, as part of their normal rounds.
 - Two new officers are now on the 4-person beat officer crew, and are integrating well.
 - Officers have been talking to individuals around the Navigation Center about social distancing and encouraging them to go back into the Center.

4. Advisory Group Problem Solving

ESNCAG members responded to questions and comments from community members, both those that were pre-submitted and those shared during the meeting.

Question: What will be done at the Navigation Center to ensure social distancing is maintained? How much space is between beds right now?

Response: The SAFE Navigation Center has capacity for 200 people, but currently just 130 guests. To the extent possible, Five Keys has moved guests to every other bed across the two dormitories which has worked out well. No new clients coming in has allowed us to create spacing. (See response to next question for additional detail on ensuring social distancing).

Question: What kind(s) of screening procedures are being used at the Navigation Center? Are guests' and staff's temperatures being monitored regularly? Will there be designated secure quarantine spaces? What steps will be taken to keep the staff safe?

Response: Yesterday, Five Keys distributed 500 masks to every single guest and staff, and distributed safety goggles to all staff. They are working to secure 2,000 more masks, which they expect to receive in the next week. They have had instances where guests reported symptoms who were tested for COVID-19. A few guests have been taken to the hospital. All tests have come back negative.

Five Keys is using a portion of the second dormitory for any clients exhibiting symptoms. Some of the steps Five Keys is taking to keep everyone safe include: wiping down surfaces everytime people are eating, requiring only one guest per table except for in the cases of couples, tables spread further apart, continuous staff meetings and trainings, signs posted everywhere, added one additional full-time cleaner for a total of two, placing X-marks on the floor to help guests maintain social distancing in the food lines, purchased 50 additional full body safety suits for a total of approximately 100 in the event of an outbreak inside the Center, making masks available to everyone, and consistent reminders for staff to wear gloves, goggles, and masks.

The City is issuing system-wide health screening procedure guidance on temperature taking and symptom assessments to Navigation Centers and shelters. Five Keys is currently ahead of the curve in implementing the many safety procedures. HSH is working with the Department of Public Health to ensure there are designated health workers to implement these procedures.

Question: How will the Navigation Center handle guests/staff as they leave and come back to the site? Is there any way to prevent any of those individuals from wandering around our neighborhood, possibly spreading the virus?

Response: The Navigation Center cannot force people to stay inside the Center as people are free to come and go. Five Keys is doing what they can to remind people to exercise safety and caution. Just like people at the supermarket who may ignore social distancing rules, they cannot ensure that guests are following every piece of advice given, especially for those guests who have particularly acute needs. They have seen a definite increase in people staying inside the Center during this time, and for those guests who go outside, staff immediately remind them to sanitize hands and put their masks on when they return. They are doing the best they can, as this is an incredibly challenging time for staff and guests. Guests are listening to the news daily, and see what is possible for housed individuals, and not necessarily available to them. Many guests are helping self-regulate and monitor, such as reminding other guests to put their masks back on or maintain 6 feet distance.

Emily Cohen shared that the outreach approach on the street has shifted during the COVID crisis along with evolving guidance. As they've stopped new intakes into the shelters and Navigation Centers, the primary focus of the SF Homeless Outreach Team (SFHOT) is to support unsheltered people stay safe during this health crisis, e.g., by working with people on social distancing, identifying the new handwashing stations deployed around the City, providing trash removal, and sharing educational information and other health tips, e.g., keeping areas as clean as possible. The City is not confiscating tents, but rather asking people to spread out in line with CDC guidance, i.e., sleeping one person per tent rather than in multiples and spreading out the tents.

In addition, SFHOT is also working to encourage any guests of Navigation Centers, if identified, to shelter in place and return to the Navigation Centers. Just like the broader public, some are great sheltering in place, others are not.

Question: Does Captain Falvey think drug activity has dropped?

Response: Captain Falvey reported that he hasn't seen a big drop. When beat officers have seen people outside the Navigation Center, they are consistently encouraging them to go inside due to the shelter in place. They have not been enforcing this.

Question: What assurances can you give us that you and your various social organizations are considering the health of all residents of our neighborhood?

Response: The City is taking this extremely seriously. San Francisco was the first city in the country to declare a state of emergency. The Bay Area was the first to issue a shelter in place order. The City is working to ensure the safety of residents both housed and unhoused. Steve Good's earlier response explains how Five Keys is addressing this inside of the Navigation Center. HSH is working closely with nonprofit service providers, including Five Keys, and people experiencing homelessness to do this. Everyone is responding with compassion, creativity, and lots of willingness to try new things. For instance, nonprofits are looking into which services can be provided remotely. Staff are working daily with the entire community.

The City is also working aggressively to procure private hotel rooms and other temporary housing to ensure those who have tested positive for COVID-19, are awaiting test results, or are showing symptoms and need to self-quarantine but are unable to do so because they are living in congregate settings like shelters, Navigation Centers, and single room occupancy hotels (SROs).

See [more here](#) for all of the proactive work the City is doing.

Question: Given that 50% of residents are estimated to be drug users, how will you support them through withdrawal during possible quarantine? Are there safe-injection sites set up in the city now for people with substance use disorders who are experiencing homelessness to stay through this crisis? Are there trained staff to deal with this?

Response: When someone goes through withdrawal they often exhibit symptoms similar to the flu. Five Keys hasn't seen any upticks in this, but would treat this like any medical issue. The Navigation Center continues to have trained medical staff coming to the Center conducting medical exams who will help deal with any health issues that come along. To the extent they can handle these issues on site, they will. If guests need to be transferred to a hospital, they will facilitate this. There are not currently safe injection sites in the City. The City is interested in overdose prevention sites/safe consumption sites as a public health intervention for substance use disorder, however these remain illegal at both the state and federal level.

Question: How will social distancing be maintained in the common areas?

Response: It's a challenge. It's a problem for everybody both housed and unhoused. The Navigation Center is implementing several strategies to address this as previously mentioned, including X-marks on the floor, rules while sitting at tables, etc. Five Keys is fortunate that the Center has a huge outdoor space that allows for social distancing, and the 130 guests can spread across the Center which is built for 200.

Question: What is the status of a more secure fencing solution for the Catacombs area rather than the piecemeal solutions that have been done to date?

Response: As mentioned last meeting, the Department of Public Works has identified this in their budget request for next fiscal year, which is next subject to the Mayor's Office review, followed by the Board of Supervisors review. The budget timeline is currently a bit up in the air due to the COVID-19 outbreak, but there are some legislative deadlines that need to be met for approving the City budget. We

do not know when the first budget hearings will take place. The budget hearings serve as an opportunity for public comment.

Question: What will happen when one of your clients tests positive for COVID-19? Statistically, this has a high likelihood in this population. Will you quarantine all clients/staff in place at the Navigation Center or will you close the facility and move occupants to a segregated isolation arrangement?

Response: The City is in the process of bringing on resources for self-quarantine and isolation for people who test positive, those who are awaiting results, or anyone else who needs to self-quarantine. These resources include places like hotel rooms and travel trailers. If someone tests positive they will be removed from the Navigation Center. HSH is working with the Department of Public Health to develop specific guidance and steps on how this will take place.

Question: For Captain Falvey: response to my 311 app requests continue to get closed without any resolution. I have a big problem with Rincon and Bryant. The number of homeless camping there has risen since the Navigation Center opened. What can we do to monitor whether the requests are really being addressed vs. closing without resolution?

Response: Captain Falvey asked to please send the 311 call numbers for him to investigate. He will connect with the Department of Public Works to see who closed out the requests and understand how they were resolved. Captain Falvey has had officers doing passing calls and the beat officers have been responding to Rincon and Bryant regularly.

Comment: I have experienced similar circumstances with the 311 app, but acknowledge that the City cannot force people to accept services. Sometimes it may not be clear to the 311 requester that the City has actually responded to the call, e.g., they've engaged the people experiencing homelessness and offered a referral to a service. If people refuse the service, there's not much recourse. We all need to understand the lack of change in a circumstance is not necessarily a lack of City action in response to 311 calls.

Question: What are the Catacombs?

Response: This refers to the area that is fenced off across from Bayside Villages where Delancey St turns into Bryant St. One side of the property belongs to Caltrans, while the other belongs to the City. Sometimes people cut through parts of the fence and enter the area.

Question: I do not see the dedicated SFPD patrol in the evenings lately... with a commensurate increase in people passed out on the street (along Main St and on Spear) are they subject to being dispatched to other areas. Is there a mechanism in place to track the time actually spent by the SFPD in the safety zone?

Response: The officers that are working this beat are dedicated to the Safety Zone. This is quite unique. that the officers are not moving to other assignments. They are assigned to the Safety Zone in 10 hour shifts 7 days/week. They do not get dispatched to calls outside of Safety Zone, unless in the case of an emergency. There are instances where they will do work related to Safety Zone that requires them to go offsite. E.g., they may have cleared an abandoned site within the Safety Zone and will need to drive to drop off the debris at a location outside of the Safety Zone, or they will go the police station to write a police report.

Question: When will you start monitoring temperatures?

Response: The City is hoping to deploy this effort systemwide in the next couple of days.

Question: What happens to a person awaiting results? Huge backlog for testing.

Response: People who live in congregate settings, like Navigation Centers, are the target population for placing in hotel rooms and additional resources the City is rapidly bringing online so they can isolate while awaiting test results.

Comment: I called the police non-emergency number because someone had taken up residence in front of the gate of my building. SFPD responded very quickly. They were moved, and while it was unclear if they accepted services, everything went as one would hope that it would. Thank you very much to the police officers.

Question: We should consider changing that oversized sidewalk to have perpendicular parking on Rincon at Bryant to avoid encampments on the problem street. How do I formally make that recommendation?

Response: This is likely an issue that MTA may need to address. Courtney McDonald is happy to look into this issue if the participant can email her with more detail.

Question: You referred to the MOU that allows the rapid expansion of these beds to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak. Can you please clarify – What amendment were you referring to, and does this mean the rapid expansion would be to accommodate people who have COVID symptoms?

Response: Last week the Mayor and the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH) put forth an amendment to the MOU which the Port Commission approved, allowing HSH and Five Keys to ramp up to 200 beds ahead of schedule. The initial idea was to offer more congregate facilities **for healthy people not affected by COVID** to address the need for more capacity across the shelter system. But after the Port approved the MOU amendment, guidance from the City's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and Department of Public Health changed, so now we do not intend to have dramatic expansion of beds. We have halted intake to all Navigation Centers to ensure the City is able to provide safer spaces for everyone inside. We appreciate the Port Commission amendment, but we have no current plans to take in more guests at this time, and we never planned to bring in individuals who had tested positive or who were symptomatic.

Question: Does that mean you could theoretically max-out the occupancy with nothing but COVID-19 patients?

Response: There is no current plan to expand capacity within current shelters. The plan is to deconcentrate the population in shelters and Navigation Centers, which is why we are rapidly looking into other resources.

Question: I heard we've moved to every other bed, but I didn't hear how far apart the beds are spaced.

Response: Steve Good was not entirely sure how many feet exactly are between beds, but estimates that beds are about four feet wide and approximately 5 feet apart.

Question: Any arrests of drug dealers in the Safety Zone?

Response: SFPD has sent both beat officers and plain clothes officers to try to track down drug dealers. There have been no arrests so far.

5. Meeting Evaluation & Close

Rick Dickerson (ESNCAG chair) and Alice Rogers (ESNCAG vice chair) closed the meeting and requested feedback from Advisory Group members and the public on the meeting format via ESNCAG@sfgov.org. All feedback will be shared and addressed at the April meeting.

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