



Heading Home Hennepin Navigation Center Update and Closure Plan

Background

The Navigation Center opened mid-December and took in 175 people that had been identified at the Hiawatha-Franklin encampment. The Center is comprised of three heated 'Sprung Structures' which original plans intended to be used for 40 people apiece (120 total). Simpson Housing operate the Center and additional supports have been provided onsite by a range of agencies including American Indian Community Development Corporation, Avivo, Hennepin County, Livio, Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center and St Stephen's Human Services.

Progress so far

The first two months were extremely challenging with a large concentration of extremely vulnerable people with high needs and high-risk behaviors moving in at the same time. Between then and February the numbers reduced and the services increased and became more coordinated. At this point staff to guest ratios reached around 1:20, service engagement increased and incidents, including those requiring emergency interventions and services, dropped markedly. The staff to guest ratio continues to increase and with it service engagement.

Move outs

As of 4/9/2019 there are 84 people remaining as guests in the Navigation Center with **91 people having moved out over the last four months at a rate of just under 6 per week**. While initial move-outs were in some cases to destinations unknown or for negative reasons (i.e. excluded due to extreme behavior), positive move-outs to housing have increased and now represent the majority of cases. This is notable given that many, if not most, have some combination of long-term experience of homelessness, criminal backgrounds, chemical dependency and other barriers to housing.

Nearly all remaining are engaged with case managers and, at last count, 30+ have referrals to supportive housing programs that have resources to assist them in finding and maintaining housing. Additional funding for Avivo's targeted housing program is now confirmed and they are bringing that team online. They will be able to work with and ultimately house and support up to 90 people. Avivo also has funding to house an additional <16 people with Serious Persistent Mental Illness which is targeted for this group.

Preparing for closure

The Navigation Center will **close on 5/31/2019**. All efforts are being made to signal the imminent closure to guests and community alike. One of the Sprung Structures will be closed (provisionally targeting April 15) when the number gets to around 80. The intention is to similarly close a second Sprung Structure as and when the number gets closer to 40.

Current projections are that 30 people will not have exited or achieved a housing outcome by closure. This assumes a modest increase in the rate of exits so far (7+ per week) supported by new resources coming online and the positive trajectory detailed above. It is expected that some people will still be in the process of pursuing a housing option, particularly through Avivo's programs.

Simpson Housing also manages the Adult Shelter Connect service which oversees reservations for all of the existing 843 single adult shelter beds in Hennepin. In the lead up to closure they will explore options to move people into available shelters, potentially staggering exits. An average of 80 shelter beds are available for reservation each morning. Availability is greatest at the beginning of the month (sometimes exceeding 150) so, for those remaining, we predict shelter availability come June 1. Simpson Housing is perfectly placed in the system to make these connections. This will be coordinated with case managers and Avivo so that those working towards housing stay connected after they move on.

For those not yet housed but unwilling to take up alternative shelter beds, case managers will assist in planning and seek to identify safe and suitable alternatives (i.e. through family and friends). St Stephen's outreach team have a long history with many in the Navigation Center. They will be notified of any leaving with unknown destinations, or a stated intent to take up an unsheltered destination, so that they can connect with them and continue working with them towards a housing outcome.

This draft document developed by Hennepin County (Office to End Homelessness) with input from Avivo, Red Lake Nation, Simpson Housing, St Stephen's Human Services.