

# Ramada Inn Community Questions

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*At a community meeting held on October 17, 2018 hosted by Councilmembers McAustin and Wilson, 62 questions were collected and categorized into four main categories: Community Impact, Project Logistics, Homelessness Impact, and Planning.*

## **Community Impact:**

### **1. What measures will be taken to reduce crime? What will happen if crime rates go up?**

This is a permanent supportive housing project with specific residents. It is not a shelter or a drop-in center. Existing permanent supportive housing projects in Pasadena such as Centennial Place, Euclid Villa and Marv's Place have not seen increased crime since their implementation. In addition to a security guard being on site during the evenings and weekends, security lighting and cameras would have been installed and entrances around the perimeter of the site would have been fenced and gated with controlled pedestrian and vehicle entrances. A manager's office would also have been located at the building's main entrance, and both a resident manager and intensive case management staff would have been located on site. If crime increases in any given area of the City, the Pasadena Police Department formulates and implements an appropriate response.

### **2. What considerations have been made to local businesses and how will they be affected?**

Local businesses would have experienced a positive impact from this project because there would have been fewer people living on the streets and sleeping in doorways or sidewalks. After the completion of similar permanent supportive housing projects, local business improvement districts have commented on this specific positive impact to the community. Residents were also anticipated to support local businesses and positively contribute to the economic success of the City.

### **3. What happens to the property values of homes at other sites where projects like this have operated?**

There is no evidence that property values would have decreased due to their proximity to a permanent supportive housing project. Pasadena has not seen a decrease in the property value of homes surrounding the three existing permanent supportive housing projects in the city, and property values were not projected to decrease with the implementation of this motel conversion.

### **4. Can the City provide the public with crime statistics for the sited project location?**

Crime statistics are publically available through the Pasadena Police Department.

### **5. How will the City ensure students are safe during the day?**

Had this project moved forward, on-site intensive case management services and property management would be available during the day. Existing permanent supportive housing projects in Pasadena have not had any security issues with nearby schools and recreation facilities or posed a safety risk to neighbors.

**6. Will the Pasadena Police Department budget be increased if this project is approved?**

Permanent supportive housing typically decreases the demand on the emergency response system. Thus an increase in need for police services was not anticipated.

**7. Will the Ramada Inn workers be compensated because they are losing their jobs?**

No, the project developer would not have been required to compensate the Ramada inn workers.

**8. Will financial incentives be offered to neighbors in order to upgrade security?**

Permanent supportive housing projects for people experiencing homelessness do not cause an increase in crime, but rather provide a solution to it. Evidence continues to demonstrate that permanent housing deters crime and supports the prosperity of communities and their residents; therefore, upgraded security was not anticipated as necessary.

**9. What churches will support this project?**

Many Pasadena faith-based communities support the development of permanent supportive housing in the city, as it is an effective solution to homelessness.

**Project Logistics:**

**10. What are the plans for the building and what types of spaces will the units be?**

The building would have been be an enclosed property with outdoor community areas for residents. The building would have comprised of approximately 75 studio apartments with on-site supportive services.

**11. What happens if tenants have a substance abuse condition (i.e. drugs and alcohol)? What are the house rules on this?**

The proposed apartment building would have had house rules that focused on ensuring tenant success. People with substance abuse disorders are more likely to recover and stabilize when they are provided with housing rather than remaining on the streets. Tenants would be provided with on-site intensive support services which will work to connect them with health, mental health, and substance abuse treatment as needed. If tenants are unable to follow house rules or abide by their lease, supportive services staff and property management would work collaboratively to find alternate permanent housing for the tenant. Every effort will be made to prevent tenants from returning to homelessness. In no event would this site have become a drug market, as the selling of drugs would not have been permitted or tolerated.

**12. How will these residents succeed if they have mental health complications?**

Existing Pasadena permanent supportive housing projects that largely serve individuals with mental health conditions have a 96% success rate, meaning the residents are able to retain their housing for at least a year after they move in. Residents would receive on-site intensive case management services to connect them to clinical services and help them with day-to-day challenges.

**13. How will the residents impact the community?**

Upon completion, 80-85 people would no longer have been homeless in Pasadena. Residents would have been provided with a stable home, including their own beds, showers, and bathroom facilities. The negative impact that people living on the streets have on the community would have been reduced. Residents also would have had a positive economic impact on the community by patronizing local businesses.

**14. Will people with substance abuse problems be allowed to live here?**

Property management cannot legally discriminate against residents for having a substance abuse disorder. As endorsed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Housing First is an approach to quickly and successfully connect individuals experiencing homelessness to permanent housing without barriers to entry, such as sobriety or treatment or service participation requirements. Supportive services would have been offered to maximize housing stability and prevent returns to homelessness. Permanent supportive housing models that use a Housing First approach have been proven to result in long-term housing stability, improved physical and behavioral health outcomes, and reduced use of crisis services such as emergency departments, hospitals, and jails. Case management and supportive services would have been offered on site daily, which would have included connection to substance abuse treatment if necessary. Each resident would have been required to abide by their lease and house rules.

**15. If someone is evicted, where do they go?**

If tenants were unable to follow house rules or abide by their lease, support services and property management would have collaboratively worked to find alternate permanent housing for the tenant. Every effort will would have been made to prevent tenants from returning to homelessness.

**16. What will the tenants be doing during the day?**

In any permanent supportive housing project, once a resident moves in they start to rebuild their life in a safe and stable home free from the vulnerabilities of the street. This could include able-bodied residents searching for a job or residents with a disabling condition receiving case management services to actively achieve their goals.

**17. What will be done to ensure medication management for persons with mental illnesses?**

Had the project been approved, daily on-site case management would have been provided to support the health of residents. Some residents would likely have been connected to In Home Supportive Services, which may have involved medication management.

**18. What is the maximum amount of people that will be housed at this project?**

There would have been about 75 apartments which would have provided homes for approximately 80-85 residents.

**19. What safeguards are there regarding people with criminal backgrounds?**

Had the project moved forward, criminal background checks would have been conducted on all applicants. Registered sex offenders and people with felony convictions for violent crimes such as battery or assault,

manufacturing of substances, drug convictions or arson would not have been housed in the apartments, with the exception of those who had successfully completed a formal rehabilitation or counseling program.

**20. What will be done to prevent the spread of infectious disease?**

This project would have prevented the spread of infectious diseases by placing people in homes. Diseases are less likely to spread when people have homes with access to adequate hygiene facilities. On-site supportive services would have also assisted with linking residents to a primary health care provider.

**21. What is the financial responsibility of the tenants that will live here? Will they be paying their rent or receive a full subsidy?**

Residents would have been financially responsible for paying monthly rent that is equivalent to about 30% of their adjusted gross income.

**22. How will the participants be able to transfer out of the project?**

Residents would have been able to stay in their homes as long as they paid rent, abided by the terms of their lease, and followed the house rules. Residents who desired to move would have had the opportunity to convert their subsidy to a Section 8 voucher, which could have been used in the private rental market.

**23. What will be the role of the security guard?**

The security guard would have been expected to support the welfare and safety of the property and the residents that live there, as well as the community.

**24. What is the City's plan to enforce and ensure health standards?**

Had the project moved forward, the Housing Department would have inspected every unit on an annual basis, and quarterly inspections of the units would have also been performed by property management to assist residents with maintaining their apartments.

**25. Will this project connect people experiencing homelessness with jobs and relevant training?**

Yes. Had this project moved forward, on-site supportive services would have connected able-bodied residents with employment services. The residents of a similar permanent supportive housing project in Pasadena are mostly physically disabled and elderly. It was expected that many of this project's residents would have been elderly or physically disabled and unable to work.

**26. Does the plumbing support cooking?**

Yes, the plumbing in the units would have been upgraded to support cooking with the installation of kitchenettes in each studio apartment.

**27. Who will own the property and will it be controlled by a franchise?**

The property would have been owned and managed by National Community Renaissance (CORE), one of the nation's largest non-profit affordable housing developers with a 20-year track record in community

revitalization. National CORE is headquartered in Rancho Cucamonga, CA and currently manages 8,300 units, including Marv's Place in Pasadena.

## **Homelessness Impact**

### **28. Will this project actually improve our homelessness problem in Pasadena?**

A Pasadena preference would have been used to ensure that people who are experiencing homelessness locally would get first priority to move into the apartments. Applicants would have been referred through an existing system that identifies and prioritizes people experiencing homelessness based on their vulnerability. Approximately 80-85 people would have been provided a home and would no longer be living on the streets of Pasadena.

### **29. Will this project attract more people experiencing homelessness to the City?**

This project would not have attracted more people experiencing homelessness to Pasadena. The apartments would have been filled using a Pasadena preference and an existing referral process. This project had the potential to end homelessness for over 80-85 people experiencing homelessness in Pasadena, which is 11% of the current homeless population in our city.

### **30. Why doesn't the City have a formalized homelessness plan?**

The current homelessness planning efforts in the City are led by the Pasadena Continuum of Care (CoC), known as the Pasadena Partnership to End Homelessness. This principle planning agency has approximately 130 members that represent a broad spectrum of the community, including service providers, faith based organizations, government and non-profit agencies, academic institutions, and the private sector. The Housing Department is currently in the process of creating and developing a new homelessness plan that builds off of the previous City of Pasadena 10-year Strategy to End Homelessness. Pasadena, along with Glendale and Long Beach, are the only cities in Los Angeles County that have their own local planning body that coordinates housing and services funding for people experiencing homelessness, also known as a Continuum of Care (CoC). Pasadena was designated as its own CoC by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in 1995. The County recently provided funding for cities to develop their own formalized homelessness plan, but specifically excluded the three CoC cities of Pasadena, Glendale and Long Beach.

### **31. What is the current homeless population in Pasadena?**

The total homeless population in Pasadena is 677. Of this total, 462 are unsheltered and sleeping on the street, while 215 are sheltered. Converting the Ramada Inn to apartments would have ended homelessness for approximately 11% of Pasadena's homeless population.

### **32. Have there been any studies on the effectiveness of these types of projects?**

Many studies have shown the effectiveness of permanent supportive housing. The National Alliance to End Homelessness, United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development all endorse permanent supportive housing as a proven, evidence-based best practice that is effective at permanently ending homelessness. Permanent supportive housing programs in Pasadena demonstrate a 96% housing retention rate among the participants, even among those with mental illnesses or substance use disorders. This type of housing is the most successful of all housing interventions at permanently ending homelessness. Many motels and hotels have successfully been converted to permanent

supportive housing across the county. Motel conversions are a much faster way to bring new permanent supportive housing to communities compared to building new structures.

## **Planning:**

### **33. How far along is this planning process and when was this project originally proposed?**

The planning process for this project had not yet started. The developer began pursuing the potential Ramada Inn conversion in September 2018.

### **34. How much City funding will go to this and where does this money come from?**

Had the project moved forward, staff would have recommended to City Council to commit approximately \$4 million in Housing Successor Agency funding that the State had previously allocated to Pasadena specifically for affording housing development and homeless services.

### **35. Has the City considered the project location's proximity to surrounding schools?**

Project locations are determined by which property owners are willing to sell. Existing permanent supportive housing projects in Pasadena are located near schools and recreational facilities that are frequented by children, and there have been no safety issues involving the residents of these permanent supportive housing buildings.

### **36. Have the Rose Inn and Travelodge been considered? What is the status of these properties?**

The Rose Inn and Travelodge were recently for sale but have been taken off the market. Therefore, these properties are not current candidates for a motel conversion project.

### **37. What is the escrow status for the Ramada Inn project?**

The developer has indicated to the City their intent to cancel escrow for this project.

### **38. Has the City identified other potential motel conversion locations?**

No, the City has not identified other potential motel conversion locations.

### **39. Why was the Ramada Inn sited for this project when the Rose Inn or Travelodge are better candidates?**

The Rose Inn and the Travelodge were not available. The Ramada Inn was sited for this project because of the owner's willingness to sell.

### **40. Is a CEQA analysis required?**

Yes, a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analysis would have been required for the Ramada Inn project, as it is a requirement for any motel conversion. Any qualifying motel conversion project is subject to the same environmental review standards as other developments.

**41. Why was the zone change made without informing residents?**

A zone change was not made, however City Council did approve a new motel conversion ordinance. After many public Planning Commission meetings, the Pasadena City Council recently passed an ordinance that allows motels and hotels to be converted to permanent supportive housing provided they are approved for a Hotel Conversion Permit. All proposed conversions would require a mailed public notice and site posting, must be approved by a hearing officer, and would have ample opportunity for public input for each proposed project. At this time, no specific projects have been granted Hotel Conversion Permits.

**42. Why isn't the City addressing problems at the existing motels in Pasadena before converting this project?**

The City seeks to address problems at all existing hotel properties. As it relates to the proposed project, this particular property was for sale by the owner and appeared to be a good opportunity.

**43. Why was the public not informed on this project earlier?**

National CORE, the nonprofit developer involved in this project, entered into a purchase and sale agreement with the current Ramada Inn owner on or about October 10. Councilmembers McAustin and Wilson quickly planned a community meeting which was held on October 17. Staff was planning to bring a recommendation for funding to City Council on October 22 to meet a County-funded application deadline.

**44. Has Pasadena been coordinating with other cities to site potential locations?**

Few cities actively site permanent supportive housing projects. The scale of the current homelessness crisis requires that each city provide homes for people experiencing homelessness. Similarly, people are most successful in housing when they are able to stay in the community they are from. If every city looks to their neighbor to solve the problem, the crisis will only get worse.

**45. Why doesn't the City spend this money to invest in our schools instead of permanent housing?**

The City funds that would have gone toward this project are Housing Successor Agency funds, which can only be spent on affordable housing projects or homeless services. These dollars cannot be spent on schools.

**46. How will the City address high density and potential overconcentration?**

If three motel conversions are ever completed, City Council will reassess the Motel Conversion Ordinance's impact on the community and neighborhood to look at factors like potential overconcentration.

**47. Why is this project being proposed in Pasadena? Why aren't other locations being taken into consideration?**

The scale of the current homelessness crisis requires that every city provide permanent supportive housing and other solutions for people experiencing homelessness.

**48. Is this the best way to use taxpayer dollars and City funding?**

Studies have shown that permanent supportive housing reduces public costs by a staggering 79%. Allowing people to live on the streets is incredibly expensive to taxpayers because people experiencing homelessness

are high utilizers of emergency rooms and have frequent interactions with paramedics, Fire, and Police Department personnel. It is five times more expensive to allow people to languish on the streets than to provide a stable home with supportive services. (Source: Where We Sleep: The Cost of Housing and Homelessness in Los Angeles; Flaming, Matsunaga, & Burns, 2009).

**49. Has the City considered vacant and abandoned properties for remodeling?**

The City is open to all suitable permanent supportive housing development sites, including vacant and abandoned properties.

**50. Is the community aware three motel conversions have been approved with the previously passed ordinance?**

No specific motel conversions have been approved with the passing of the City's Motel Conversion ordinance.

**51. Are community meetings held simply because it is a procedural requirement, or does the City actually listen to input?**

The City is committed to creating opportunities for public input to help inform the decisions of its elected officials. The community meeting regarding the Ramada Inn project was held in advance of any decision making regarding this specific project for that reason.

**52. What funds are being used to support this project?**

Multiple sources of funding would have been used to develop the apartments, including City, County, and State funding, low-income housing tax credits, and tax exempt bonds. Funding for the on-site supportive services would have come from Measure H dollars, and ongoing rental assistance would have come from either City or County funding.

**53. Why doesn't the City consider repurposing and adapting Pasadena Unified School District buildings?**

PUSD has not made any of their properties available for permanent supportive housing.

**54. Is this a discretionary project? What public processes for input will be in place, if any?**

Yes, this project would have been discretionary. Had the project moved forward, a public hearing officer would have made a determination regarding issuing a Hotel Conversion Permit. City Council would have had to vote at a regular, public meeting to commit city funds to the project. Additionally, City Council would have had to approve committing the City's project-based vouchers (rental assistance) to the project.

**55. What processes are in place for the public to vote against this proposal?**

Proposed motel conversions will not be placed on a public ballot. City staff had intended to make a recommendation to City Council to commit public funds to support this specific project. The community meeting held on October 17 was hosted by Councilmembers McAustin and Wilson in order to gain feedback from the community on this proposal. Had the project moved forward, the City would have held public community meetings throughout the planning process to gain insight from the community and inform the design and management of the project.

**56. Why did the voucher program in Pasadena fail 24 years ago?**

We are unsure which program is being referred to in this question.

**57. Is there a distance requirement from hospitals, including animal hospitals?**

The Motel Conversion Ordinance does not include a distance requirement.

**58. Is the City planning to convert one motel per district?**

No, there are no additional motel conversion project proposals that the City is considering. The Motel Conversion Ordinance does not specify a quota or limit of projects per district.

**59. Do these projects have to be on the Rose Parade route?**

Many motels in Pasadena happen to fall on the Rose Parade route. The Ramada Inn was selected because of the owner's willingness to sell.

**60. How will Measure I contribute to the City's work on this project?**

Measure I is a potential revenue source for the City's General Fund. No General Fund dollars would have been committed to this project.

**61. Why aren't other Council members present at this meeting?**

City Council members typically attend community meetings for projects that are applicable to or will impact their district directly. In this case, the proposed project was on the border of two districts so two City Councilmembers hosted a joint community meeting.

**62. Why did this property go into escrow when it wasn't approved for this purpose?**

The Motel Conversion Ordinance will go into effect on November 17, 2018, which would have been well before any sale was final.