



AGENDA COVER MEMO

Memorandum Date: June 13, 2025
Order Date: July 9, 2025

TO: Board of County Commissioners

DEPARTMENT: Health & Human Services

PRESENTED BY: James Ewell, Homelessness and Community Action Manager Kate Budd, Human Services Division Manager

AGENDA ITEM TITLE: WORK SESSION/ ORDER 25-07-09-XX/ In the Matter of Approving a Contract Action with Equitable Social Solutions for Navigation Center Operations and Delegating Authority to the County Administrator, Their Designee, or Their Sub-Delegate to Sign the Approved Actions.

I. MOTION

In the matter of Work Session/Order/Navigation Center FY26 Operations Contract

II. DISCUSSION

The Lane County Department of Health and Human Services, Human Services Division is presenting on the Navigation Center FY26 Operations Contract during the Work Session. The department is also requesting the Board of Commissioners to delegate authority to award contract to Equitable Social Solutions (ESS) for the Navigation Center FY26 Operations and to the County Administrator or their designee to execute contract documents.

III. BACKGROUND / IMPLICATIONS OF ACTION

A. Board action and other history

In March 2018, Lane County, in collaboration with City of Eugene secured the services of Technical Assistance Collaborative Inc. (TAC) to conduct a public shelter feasibility study. TAC was to assess the current homeless crisis response and service system within lane county, including resource capacity and gaps.

The TAC report identified a need to expand shelter for single individuals. The recommendation was for a congregate navigation center to serve 75 people through a model that is low-barrier and can accommodate the resident's people, pets and possessions.

In 2020, the former VA Clinic on River Rd. was purchased by Lane County and utilized as a COVID quarantine shelter during the height of the crisis. Once the need for the quarantine shelter subsided, the building was identified as an appropriate space for the needed Navigation Center and substantial rehabilitation, costing over \$5 million, was conducted.

In preparation for the Navigation Center, robust community outreach and engagement with the local area was conducted by Lane County and City of Eugene staff. It included meeting with the two area neighborhood associations, knocking on doors, mailing informational flyers and engaging with the high school. A monthly community meeting was established with the two neighborhood associations, ESS, City of Eugene and Lane County staff. A representative from Eugene Police Department attends quarterly. This meeting has continued to present day and is open to all businesses and neighbors in the area as a collective space to share and address challenges.

In September 2022, the Navigation Center opened to residents. Equitable Social Solutions (ESS) serves as the operator, after scoring first in a customary Lane County Request for Proposal process. The individuals sheltered are those with high physical and behavioral health needs who engage often with systems of care and those waiting for housing in community programs. The Center residents are placed through Lane County Coordinated Entry in partnership with local street outreach programs. Individuals may not walk-up and access the Navigation Center.

All Navigation Center residents are required to follow the Good Neighbor Agreement, which was negotiated between Lane County, City of Eugene and the two neighborhood associations near the shelter prior to its opening. ESS has a dedicated 24/7 security team that monitors the shelter property and the surrounding areas to mitigate challenges that may arise.

Per Lane County Manual, in the Spring of 2025, Lane County performed a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Navigation Center operations. The process included the customary scoring of applications by a committee made up of community members and discussion of scores. Four total agencies applied to serve as the operator. ESS received the highest score on their application and was subsequently chosen by the RFP committee to serve as the Navigation Center operator pending Board of County Commissioners approval to award contract.

B. Policy Issues

The Board of County Commissioners is being asked to approval award of contract with Equitable Social Solutions to operate the Navigation Center, from July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026.

C. Board Goals

The Lane County Strategic Plan calls for addressing the community's need for affordable housing and addressing homelessness. Specifically, it calls for increasing housing options for residents to reduce the incidence of homelessness and increase affordability. Specific strategies include: convening, sponsoring, and implementing a collaborative multi-jurisdictional affordable housing action plan; identifying and implementing programs for

supportive housing, short-term transitional housing, and long-term and permanent solutions to address homelessness; increasing access to prevention and treatment services and developing programs; and for developing policy focused on behavioral health, community health, and youth.

D. Financial and/or Resource Considerations

Lane County funds the Navigation Center primarily with resources from the State of Oregon. Those funds come with specific guidelines dictating allowable uses of resources and program requirements. This includes Navigation Center programming being low-barrier, allowing pets, storage of personal belongings and focusing on reducing barriers to housing.

The FY26 Navigation Center FY26 contract is estimated to be in the amount of \$3,985,970. This encompasses full 24/7 operation of the 75 bed center, including staffing, case management, in-house supports, resident meals, supplies, security, minor maintenance, transportation, barrier reduction funding and administration.

E. Health Implications

Based on numerous studies, one year of homelessness without shelter equates to a 17-year reduction in life expectancy. For many, the daily struggle for food, shelter, clothing, and safety is increasingly traumatic and unstable. This reality in turn, exacerbates disease, complicates treatment, and drives high mortality rates among those who are unsheltered.

Emergency Shelter provides individuals with safe, stable and predictable access to food, shelter and hygiene. It also allows individuals an opportunity to stabilize, engage in needed supports and begin to reduce their barriers to permanent housing.

F. Analysis

James Ewell, Homelessness and Community Action Manager will share the Navigation Center purpose, background, programming and outcomes. He will also share feedback received related to the broader area outside the Navigation Center and steps taken to try to mitigate those challenges.

Kate Budd, Human Services Division Manager will walk through an analysis of proposed options related to the Navigation Center Operations.

G. Alternatives / Options

1. Approve award of contract to Equitable Social Solutions for the Navigation Center Operations and delegate authority to the County Administrator to execute contract documents
2. Postpone Board of County Commissioners decision to award contract and approve delegated authority for July 22, 2025 meeting.
3. Approve Navigation Center Operations contract and seek to move the Center.
4. Do not approve the contract and seek to close the Navigation Center.

H. Recommendation

Lane County Health & Human Services, Human Service Division recommends #1 – The Board of County Commissioner approve award of contract to Equitable Social Solutions for the Navigation Center Operations and delegate authority to the County Administrator to execute contract documents.

I. Attachments

- Presentation Slides
- Board Order

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF LANE COUNTY, OREGON

ORDER NO:

IN THE MATTER OF APPROVING A CONTRACT
ACTION WITH EQUITABLE SOCIAL SOLUTIONS
FOR NAVIGATION CENTER OPERATIONS AND
DELEGATING AUTHORITY TO THE COUNTY
ADMINISTRATOR, THEIR DESIGNEE, OR THEIR
SUB-DELEGATE TO SIGN THE APPROVED ACTIONS

WHEREAS, Lane Manual Chapter 20 sets forth policy regarding award of contracts, and amendments, submission of grants and ratification of contracts for services and policy regarding signatory authority of the County Administrator; and

WHEREAS, Equitable Social Solutions has been recommend award for Navigation Center FY26 Services through a request for proposal process conducted in accordance with Lane Manual Chapter 20 for an estimated amount of \$3,985,970. And

NOW, THEREFORE, the Board of County Commissioners of Lane County **ORDERS** as follows:

1. Lane County, is approved to accept award of contract to Equitable Social Solutions for the Navigation Center Operations for Fiscal Year 2026 up to the amount of \$3,985,970.
2. The County Administrator, their designee, or the sub-delegate is delegated the authority to sign and execute contract documents to Equitable Social Solutions for the Navigation Center Operations

ADOPTED this ____ day of July, 2025.

David Loveall, Chair
Lane County Board of Commissioners



THE RIVER AVENUE NAVIGATION CENTER

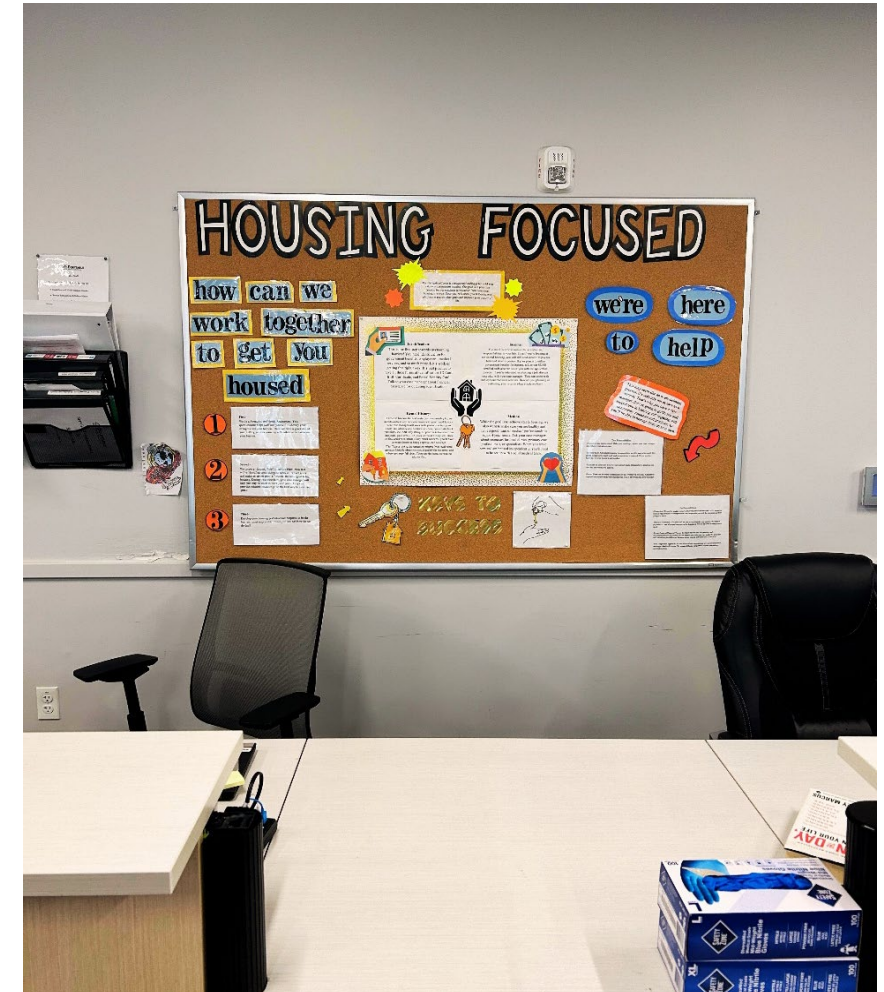
KATE BUDD, HUMAN SERVICES DIVISION MANAGER

JAMES EWELL, HOMELESSNESS & COMMUNITY ACTION MANAGER

PRESENTED ON 7/8/2025

River Ave. Navigation Center

- ▶ History
- ▶ Purpose
- ▶ Current Neighborhood Challenges
- ▶ Contract Options
- ▶ Analysis
- ▶ Next Steps



“When you’re out on your luck, there are people who care. These people really do care. My life is nothing but joy because of you.”
- Bryan



- ▶ Opened in September 2022.
- ▶ Partnership with City of Eugene
- ▶ Operated by Equitable Social Solutions (ESS) from opening to current date
- ▶ Provides support for adults who need assistance transitioning from homelessness into safe and stable housing.
- ▶ 75-bed congregate style Emergency Shelter
- ▶ April 2025 Lane County Request for Proposal (RFP) resulted in ESS being the top scoring entity out of four applicants

“The Navigation Center provided me with the tools and support I needed to transform my life, helping me develop new skills and regain my confidence.”
-Geri

Traditional Shelter Model

- ▶ Limited Case Management
- ▶ Walk-In
- ▶ No direct connection to housing resources
- ▶ Many requirements and rules

Navigation Center Model

- ▶ Intensive Case Management & Connections to Resources
- ▶ Referral Only
- ▶ Direct connection to Coordinated Entry
- ▶ No Entry Requirements

WHY IS THE NAVIGATION CENTER LOW BARRIER?

**The funding through
Oregon Housing and Community Services
requires it & it's a best practice.**

**In order to meet minimum standards as a low barrier shelter,
OHCS requires the following conditions be met:**

- ▶ Sobriety and treatment are voluntary;
- ▶ No required documentation of identification, custody, citizenship, or gender. Furthermore, shelters must meet the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Equal Access Rule, 81 FR 64763, to ensure services are available to all individuals and families regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status;
- ▶ Shelter accommodates pets and belongings;
- ▶ No charge to individuals or families for stays, meals, or services rendered; and
- ▶ Shelters do not exclude people with criminal convictions, poor credit, or eviction histories.

**LOW BARRIER MEANS SCREENING PEOPLE IN RATHER THAN SCREENING
PEOPLE OUT.**

Are there rules or guidelines residents must follow?

Yes! Residents are required to sign an intake packet that states they understand expectations, and they will be held accountable for policy infractions.

The policies and guidelines include but are not limited to:

- ▶ Safety & Respect of all
- ▶ Respecting facility & resident belongings
- ▶ Dorm cleanliness
- ▶ No Drug and alcohol use/possession onsite
- ▶ No Onsite visitors and loitering
- ▶ Pet and Animal responsibilities
- ▶ Unsafe behaviors in or around the Nav Center property
- ▶ Following the Good Neighbor Agreement
- ▶ Engagement in Case Management Services

What happens if someone violates the rules?

- ▶ It is Equitable Social Solutions' goal to ensure the safety and comfort of all participants and animals during their stay at the Navigation Center.
- ▶ Violation of the rules and policies may result in immediate participant exit. Depending on the cause, residents may be given a series of reminders prior to an exit. Continuation of non-compliance could result in establishing an exit plan.
- ▶ Program exits occur during a meeting with the management team where additional resources and alternative sheltering options will be provided.
- ▶ Existing Residents are transported to their local destination of choice.

WHAT LOW BARRIER DOES NOT MEAN

Not having rules
or expectations
of shelter
participants

Allowing drug
use or criminal
behavior on
shelter property

Anyone who
shows up at the
door gets
sheltered

Treatment
options are not
offered

LOW BARRIER ACCESS DOES NOT MEAN LOW EXPECTATIONS

ONSITE SERVICES



CASE
MANAGEMENT



MEALS AND
HYGIENE



TRANSPORTATION



COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT



PEER SUPPORT



FINANCIAL
ASSISTANCE FOR
MOVE-IN COSTS

ONSITE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND SPECIALIZED RESOURCES



HIVAlliance



NewHorizons
Every Care. For Everyone.



SHELTER PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS FOR THE NAVIGATION CENTER JULY 2024 TO JUNE 2025

170 INDIVIDUALS SERVED

25% (43)
OVER THE AGE OF
55

92% (156)
AT LEAST ONE PHYSICAL
AND/OR MENTAL HEALTH
DISABILITY,
79% (134) HAVE AT LEAST
TWO.

55% (93) EXPERIENCED
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE,
SEXUAL ASSAULT
AND/OR HUMAN
TRAFFICKING

69% (118) HAD BEEN
ON THE STREETS FOR
ONE YEAR OR LONGER
PRIOR TO ACCESS

43% (73) ASSESSED
AS HIGHLY
VULNERABLE
(AVERAGE RATE
ACROSS ALL
SHELTERS IS 18%)

21% (35) has a
Developmental
Disability

23% (40)
HAVE AT LEAST ONE
JOB

Locally and across the nation low-barrier shelters have better outcomes than high barrier shelters.
Including exits to permanent housing, treatment engagement and length of stay.

SHELTER OUTCOMES FOR THE NAVIGATION CENTER

JULY 2024 TO JUNE 2025

170 INDIVIDUALS
SERVED

95.8% BED
UTILIZATION RATE
(75 BEDS TOTAL)

41% (39) OF 99
INDIVIDUALS EXITED
WERE EXITED TO
PERMANENT HOUSING
(AVERAGE ACROSS ALL
SHELTERS IS 25%)

44% (43) OF 99
INDIVIDUALS EXITED
WERE EXITED TO
MORE STABLE LIVING
SITUATIONS

76.5% (77) OF
CLIENTS EXITED TO
HOUSING REMAINED
HOUSED AT SIX-
MONTHS AFTER EXIT

70.5% (71) OF
CLIENTS EXITED TO
HOUSING REMAINED
HOUSED AT 12-
MONTHS AFTER EXIT

5.5% (6) OF CLIENTS
WHO EXITED TO
HOUSING RETURNED
TO HOMELESSNESS
WITHIN 1 YEAR

“Life is already 120% better since I met you guys. I just needed a chance. You pushed me up and gave me self- confidence that I never would have gotten had you guys not recognized me”.

-Lans

Neighborhood Concerns

- ▶ Increase number of people who are unhoused in the greater neighborhood.
 - ▶ Sleeping, loitering, panhandling, existing
- ▶ Increased theft & crime
- ▶ Increased visibility of people abusing illegal drugs & drug paraphernalia
- ▶ Near a school (.6 miles)

Neighbors have also shared feedback that the Navigation Center is not directly contributing challenges and is a bright spot amidst the challenges.

MEASURES TAKEN BY THE NAVIGATION CENTER TO ADDRESS NEIGHBORHOOD CONCERNS



Monthly Community
Action Committee
Meetings



Increased Security,
including patrols of the
building perimeter and
staff present in outdoor
kiosk.



Direct conversations
with business owners
& neighbors
encouraged 24/7.



Community Clean-
Up Events



Neighborhood
Association
Engagement



“Good Neighbor
Agreement” and
Behavior
Management

DISCHARGE DATA & PRACTICES

39 INDIVIDUALS (23%)
EXITED TO
HOMELESSNESS
BETWEEN JULY 1, 2024
AND JUNE 30, 2025, DUE
TO RULE VIOLATIONS

5 INDIVIDUALS (3%)
EXITED FOR VIOLATIONS
OF GOOD NEIGHBOR
AGREEMENT

EXITED PARTICIPANTS
OFFERED BUS PASSES OR
TAXI FARE TO RELOCATE
AWAY FROM
NEIGHBORHOOD

EXITED PARTICIPANTS
OFFERED DIRECT
CONNECTION TO OTHER
SHELTER WHEN POSSIBLE

IF DISCHARGED FOR
RULE VIOLATION(S),
PARTICIPANTS CAN NOT
BE RE-REFERRED TO
PROJECT FOR AT LEAST
90 DAYS

COMPOUNDING NEIGHBORHOOD FACTORS



High Number of
Unsheltered
Individuals Not
Connected to
the Navigation
Center



Railroad
Track & Urban
Core
Encampment
Displacement



Long
Standing
Criminal
Activity in the
Area



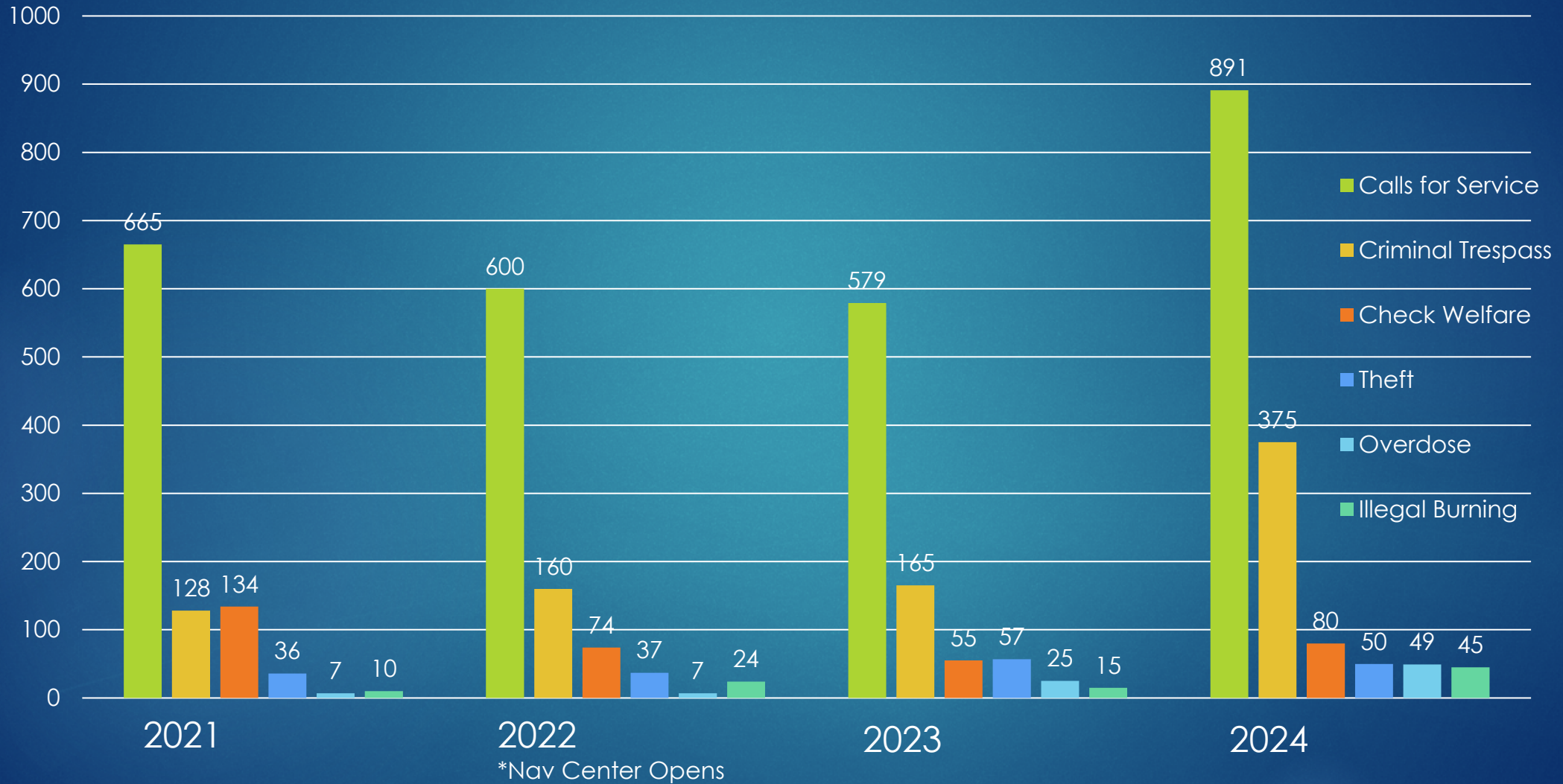
Limited
Security on
Neighboring
Properties



Encouragement
to call EPD for
Additional Patrols

EUGENE POLICE DEPARTMENT CALLS FOR SERVICE

Quality of Life & Person Crimes by Calendar Year



IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- ▶ Continuing to encourage neighbors, businesses to call EPD if a crime is being committed
- ▶ Invite calls to the Navigation Center 24/7 to problem solve.
- ▶ Ensuring Visibility of Security Guards
- ▶ Continued Neighbor Engagement and Response Through the Community Meeting
- ▶ Strengthen Partnerships with Law Enforcement
- ▶ Explore County funding & Pursue Funding for Additional Street Outreach, Shelter and Places for People Who are Unhoused To Be.



NAVIGATION CENTER OPERATIONS OPTIONS



**Approve the Navigation
Center Operations One-Year
Contract today or on July
22nd**



**Fund Program Operations
Contract & Move the
Navigation Center**



**Do not Sign an Operations
Contract & Close the
Navigation Center**



Option A

APPROVE THE NAVIGATION CENTER OPERATIONS CONTRACT

Pros

- Highly needed sheltering capacity & diversity of location remains
- Keeps program open to continue to try new ways to mitigate challenges.
- The Navigation Center Operator has a good relationship with the neighborhood associations to continue to build on.
- Meets 3-year restrictive covenant requirements to utilize the current building as an emergency shelter.
 - Ends September 12, 2025
- Utilizes dedicated State shelter funding for the Navigation Center

Cons

- Challenges remain, including number of people who are unhoused in the area.



Option B

SIGN PROGRAM OPERATIONS CONTRACT & MOVE THE NAVIGATION CENTER

Pros

- Meet the requests of some neighbors if the center is relocated out of the area.
- A better location and/or space may exist

Cons

- High Costs
 - Navigation Center Rehabilitation
 - Funded with COVID and State Allocated Funding
 - \$ ~5.079 million
 - Transition Costs
- Building Use Covenant
 - Due to funding sources used to rehab the building - it must be used as a shelter through September 2025
- Challenge to find large enough space
 - Navigation Center is 18,550 sq ft
 - Need space large enough for 75 shelter beds, kitchen, group spaces and adequate restrooms/showers
- Reduces shelter beds & emergency response options in the broader area.
- People who are unhoused will still be in the area.
- May lose dedicated State shelter funding.

DO NOT SIGN THE OPERATIONS CONTRACT & CLOSE THE NAVIGATION CENTER

Pro

- Some funding would be saved and can be used on other priorities.
- Meet requests of some neighbors.

Con

- Building Use Covenant
 - Due to funding sources used to rehab the building - it must be used as a shelter until September 2025
- Reduces shelter beds & emergency response options in the broader area.
- Significantly reduces total number of shelter beds in the region.
- Makes it more difficult to transition people to housing.
- People who are unhoused will still be in the area.
- May lose dedicated State shelter funding to the Navigation Center forever.



STAFF RECOMMENDATION

A) APPROVE THE NAVIGATION CENTER OPERATIONS CONTRACT

Comply with Restrictive
Covenant

Utilize Current Shelter Funding as
Intended

Continue Working with the
Neighborhood Associations & Eugene
Police Department

Dig further into the data

Explore Programming Options
within Funding Requirements

Continuity & Diversity of Services

Seek funding for additional
resources to support people who
are unhoused.

