

SUBJECT: **DEVELOPMENT OF WEST HOLLYWOOD CARE TEAM
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CRISIS RESPONSE UNIT – UPDATE
THREE**

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STATEMENT ON THE SUBJECT:

The City Council will receive a progress update on the development of the West Hollywood Care Team, a behavioral health crisis response unit. This team will serve the community in addition to existing first responders that address law enforcement and life safety needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1) Authorize the Director of Finance and Technology Services to increase budgeted revenues and budgeted expenditures in the Miscellaneous Grant Fund by the amount of future grant award(s) upon receipt.
- 2) When/if awarded targeted federal grant funding, authorize the City Manager to enter into agreements to purchase, retrofit and brand the Care Team vehicles, as specified by the terms of the grant.
- 3) Direct Strategic Initiatives Division to provide the next Care Team program development update to City Council in February 2023; items requiring Council direction prior to February will be brought forward as needed.

BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS:

At the March 21, 2022 City Council meeting, Council directed staff to return in August 2022 with an update on the development of the West Hollywood Care Team. The Care Team will be a new program for the community offering behavioral health crisis response services to housed and unhoused constituents. The Care Team expands the scope of the City's existing first responder services that address law enforcement and life safety through the Los Angeles County Sheriff's and Fire Departments, respectively.

In this third update to City Council, staff is providing a summary of substantial status changes at the national and regional level that have occurred since March 2022. These changes influence the direction and pacing of program development and future launch of West Hollywood's Care Team. This staff report builds on the update provided to City Council on March 21, 2022 (Attachment A).

The City is aligning the Care Team program with LA County's developing Alternative

Crisis Response (ACR) system; this regional work is led by LA County Department of Mental Health (DMH), and supported by the LA County CEO Office of Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI). The City's approach to aligning West Hollywood's Care Team with the regional ACR system is similar to how the City contracts for and operates a West Hollywood MET team that leverages the regional Los Angeles Sheriff's Department MET system. The difference in this process is that the LASD MET system existed for many years prior to the City contracting for a team while, in comparison, the regional ACR system is just beginning and there is not yet a model for cities to create local teams that connect to the ACR system.

Section 1 below describes national and regional updates relevant to the Care Team and impacting program development. Many of the material changes occurred in July 2022 or are expected in the near future. The executive summary below identifies the program development priorities that are now possible as a result of the national and regional changes that have occurred.

Executive Summary of Next Steps for Care Team Program Development

To continue developing the West Hollywood Care Team program, staff will carry forward the City Council direction from the March 21, 2022 meeting and also prioritize work towards items A-E below:

- A. Establish a partnership with Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services to enable Care Team dispatch from the Didi Hirsch 988 crisis counseling call center.
- B. Work with DMH to develop a city agreement template that aligns and integrates the Care Team with the regional Alternative Crisis Response system, especially as it relates to Medi-Cal funding.
- C. Develop an RFQ/RFP to solicit a vendor to operate the Care Team; including bid requirements that align with DMH's Alternative Crisis Response system.
- D. Partner with LASD West Hollywood Station to create capacity for station dispatchers to assess and triage calls to 988 (Didi Hirsch) and Care Team.
- E. In anticipation of receiving federal funding to support the purchase, retrofit and branding of the Care Team vans, begin process of identifying needed vendors.

Section 1. Summary of National and Regional Updates that Impact the West Hollywood Care Team

Update: On July 16, 2022, Federal Communications Commission completed the national launch of 988 to replace the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number.

- *Relevance to Care Team program development:* The national launch of 988 is an essential building block for the Care Team program. West Hollywood plans to make 988 the primary access point for phone-based crisis counseling and to dispatch the Care Team. Centralizing the Care Team access within 988 reflects community feedback and preference to reduce interactions with the 911 system. Moving forward with 988 is also in alignment with LA County's plan to make 988 the central phone number to call for crisis counseling and any needed in-person behavioral health crisis services.

New insights from SAMHSA regarding 988 call routing are also important to factor into the development of West Hollywood's program. "The [988] Lifeline automatically routes calls by area code to the nearest crisis center (unlike 911, which uses geolocation). As part of the 2020 Designation Act, the Federal Communications Commission submitted a report examining the feasibility and cost of including an automatic dispatchable location that would be conveyed with a 988 call. Within that report, the FCC recommended that Congress require that a multi-stakeholder group be convened to further examine the key issues and collaborate on potential next steps. The FCC held a 988 Geolocation Forum in May 2022 and the agency is actively analyzing the information gathered during that forum."

For West Hollywood, this means that community members calling 988 from phone numbers with area codes in Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and Ventura counties will be routed to the Didi Hirsch 988 call center. Community members calling from other area codes will be routed to the call center that serves the region associated with their phone number. All callers will be supported through phone-based crisis counseling. But West Hollywood callers who are routed to 988 centers outside the region or state will not be able to link to the West Hollywood Care Team as seamlessly. The number of people who may experience this issue is currently unknown. A temporary solution has yet to be identified until the FCC addresses the geolocation capacity for 988.

Additionally, staff are noting that, until the geolocation issue is resolved, the 988 system will not have the capacity to track the volume of incoming calls from West Hollywood community members. However, staff will be able to track the calls that could not be resolved through crisis counseling and required dispatch of the West Hollywood Care Team for in-person services in the City.

Update: On July 15, 2022, LA County DMH announced Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services will serve as the LA County 988 call center and crisis team dispatcher.

- *Relevance to Care Team program development:* At the time of this staff report, Didi Hirsch and DMH are completing contract negotiations for Didi Hirsch to assume the role as the 988 call center and dispatcher for DMH mobile crisis responders. (The technology required for directly dispatching mobile crisis responders is yet to be created, but DMH will be issuing a solicitation for a vendor in the future). With DMH's selection of Didi Hirsch, City staff will proceed with formalizing the City's partnership with Didi Hirsch.

Update: California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) will build communications architecture between 911/988 in the future; LASD and Didi Hirsch will not be running a 911/988 call interoperability proof-of-concept pilot at this time.

- *Relevance to Care Team program development:* The envisioned future state for care coordination between 911 and 988 is a seamless, warm call transfer from LASD West Hollywood Station dispatchers to Didi Hirsch crisis counselors. However, CalOES recently revised its timeline for building the communications architecture to support this capacity to a future date after CalOES secures legislative approval and direction.

Leading up to the March 21, 2022 Council meeting, LASD and city staff were ready to pursue including West Hollywood Station in a proposed LASD/Didi Hirsch 911/988 proof-of-concept pilot. This pilot would have tested the communications architecture supporting LASD Dispatch to complete 988 transfers to Didi Hirsch. Given this shift in the timeline for 911/988 warm handoffs, city staff intend to collaborate closely with LASD regional leadership, West Hollywood Station leadership and Didi Hirsch to explore the creation of a temporary strategy to facilitate triage from 911/LASD Dispatch to 988/Didi Hirsch Crisis Counselors.

Update: On July 20, 2022, DMH announced plans to prepare for implementing a technology solution to address patient care coordination across LA County's behavioral health service continuum.

- *Relevance to Care Team program development:* The Care Team needs a technology solution to manage patient care and coordination with County services. The LA County CEO's Office will be issuing an RFP for a technology solution to integrate programs related to the Alternative Crisis Response initiative and will likely house many of the capabilities needed for the Care Team to effectively coordinate patient care that involves regional acute psychiatric resources. LAC CEO Office estimates the technology vendor will be selected by end of 2022 and the application will be implemented and operational by mid-2023.

Update: DMH has yet to announce the contractors that will operate the County's new Mobile Crisis Outreach Teams (MCOTs).

- *Relevance to Care Team program development:* DMH conducted a solicitation for MCOT proposals in May/June 2022 and is in the process of selecting community-based organizations to staff MCOT teams in different areas of LA County. DMH advised that the solicitation returned zero proposals for teams covering the West Hollywood area; DMH plans to reissue the solicitation and keep it open until sufficient proposals are received. City staff are monitoring for public updates from DMH announcing the selected organizations and planned coverage areas to assess if any organizations are currently contracted or collaborative partners with City of West Hollywood.

Update: DMH is studying the creation of a framework for collaborating with cities seeking to align local programs with the regional Alternative Crisis Response system.

- *Relevance to Care Team program development:* The City intends to align Care Team operations with the regional Alternative Crisis Response system led by LA County DMH. City staff are in conversation with DMH and staff in the newly created ACR Unit; the goal is to help shape how DMH partners with cities.

Update: Congressionally directed spending requests are currently under review.

- *Relevance to Care Team program development:* In spring of 2022, City Councilmembers, along with the City's Legislative Affairs team, lobbied Congressman Adam Schiff's Office for seed funding in support of the West Hollywood Care Team. Staff submitted a formal congressionally directed spending request for an appropriation from the U.S. Department of Health and Human

Services 2023 Budget to Representative Adam Schiff's Office, and additionally to Senator Diane Feinstein's Office and Senator Jose Padilla's Office. Congressman Schiff's office is advocating for a \$300,000 allocation for the Care Team to support the purchase, retrofit and branding of the program's vans that will enable the Care Team to provide mobile services to community members. A response to this funding request is expected by fall 2022.

Update: On July 11, 2022, Hollywood 2.0 launched, a significant step toward increasing behavioral health resources in the Hollywood area.

Relevance to Care Team program development: Hollywood 2.0 is a highly anticipated (and years-in-the-making) DMH pilot project to expand comprehensive community-based care and services to people experiencing mental illness and homelessness in the Hollywood community. DMH is partnering with Hollywood 4WRD to facilitate the community engagement required to build the pilot. Hollywood 4WRD is a grassroots public-private coalition addressing homelessness. As of spring 2022, West Hollywood city staff are now members of the coalition. Staff will participate in the Hollywood 2.0 Program Design Subcommittee to help shape resources to meet the needs of West Hollywood community members who also frequent the Hollywood area. Program design is likely to include focus on establishing a critically-needed crisis stabilization unit (CSU) to address acute psychiatric needs; CSUs offer a community-based option for care in lieu of inpatient hospital care. As discussed in the March 21, 2022 update to City Council, staff need to simultaneously focus on developing the West Hollywood Care Team while also advancing the City's advocacy for expanded psychiatric receiving facilities to meet the most acute mental health needs in the community.

CONFORMANCE WITH VISION 2020 AND THE GOALS OF THE WEST HOLLYWOOD GENERAL PLAN:

This item is consistent with the Primary Strategic Goal(s) (PSG) and/or Ongoing Strategic Program(s) (OSP) of:

- OSP-5: Support People through Social Services.
- OSP-12: Actively Participate in Regional Issues.

In addition, this item is compliant with the following goal(s) of the West Hollywood General Plan:

- HS-1: Maintain and pursue humane social policies and social services that address the needs of the community.

EVALUATION PROCESSES:

Evaluation methodology and performance measurements will be created as part of the development of the West Hollywood Care Team.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND HEALTH:

Increased opportunities to deliver more appropriate, service-focused response to behavioral health crises will enhance the goal of improving community health and quality of life.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

A range of community stakeholders have been, and will continue to be, engaged to develop and implement the proposed Crisis Response unit including: residents and businesses, the City’s contracted social services agencies, the West Hollywood Homeless Collaborative, the City Council Subcommittee on Homelessness, the City’s Social Justice Task Force, City Advisory Boards, Human Services Commission, Public Safety Commission, the Westside Cities Council of Government’s Homeless Working Group, people with lived expertise in homelessness and mental health conditions, advocates from mental health organizations, including NAMI-Westside LA, and Los Angeles County Departments including: Alternatives to Incarceration Office, Department of Mental Health, Sheriff’s Department, Fire Department, and Supervisorial District Three

Staff reports and video presentations about the project are available online at www.weho.org/strategicinitiatives and information is also promoted on social media through the “WeHo Cares” Facebook and Twitter accounts.

OFFICE OF PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY:

HUMAN SERVICES & RENT STABILIZATION DEPARTMENT/STRATEGIC INITIATIVES DIVISION

FISCAL IMPACT:

None at this time.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A: March 21, 2022 Staff Report to West Hollywood City Council, Development of a Citywide Behavioral Health Crisis Response Unit – Phase 2 Update