

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WEST HOLLYWOOD CARE TEAM BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CRISIS RESPONSE PROGRAM, APPROVAL OF AN AGREEMENT FOR SERVICES WITH HATHAWAY-SYCAMORES, AND AUTHORIZATION OF A FORTHCOMING MOU WITH LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

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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, which will serve the community as a behavioral health crisis response program. The Council will also consider approval of an agreement for services with Hathaway-Sycamores (Sycamores) to operate the West Hollywood Care Team and authorizing the City Manager to execute the forthcoming Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health for integration of the Care Team with the County's Alternative Crisis Response system.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1) Approve the Agreement for Services with Hathaway-Sycamores for a total not-to-exceed amount of \$2,186,836 until June 30, 2024, with the option to renew the agreement for two additional years for a total not-to-exceed amount of \$7,737,021. The budget includes one-time start-up capital expenses to purchase the necessary vehicles and equipment for Care Team operations.

- 2) Authorize the City Manager or designee to execute documents incident to the agreement.
- 3) Authorize the City Manager or designee to execute all necessary documents related to the forthcoming MOU with the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health.

BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS:

This staff report updates the City Council about the development of the West Hollywood Care Team. As proposed, the Care Team will provide behavioral health crisis response services to both housed and unhoused West Hollywood community members. Services will be available around the clock, all year long including holidays. The Care Team will be the mobile responder for people who call the 988 Suicide & Crisis Hotline for counseling services and need in-person support within City limits. Additionally, the Care Team will complement and enhance the City's existing investments in contracted social service partners and services provided by Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, LA County Fire Department, and Block by Block Security Ambassadors.

In this fourth update to the City Council (see Attachment A for the previous Care Team staff report), staff outlines significant milestones accomplished and recommendations for City Council approval to launch the Care Team this calendar year.

Executive Summary

The following program development milestones are described in detail in this report.

1. Formalized Care Team program design in close collaboration with LA County Department of Mental Health's Alternative Crisis Response System and the 988 Suicide & Crisis Help Line.
2. Negotiated a sole-source agreement for Care Team operations with Hathaway-Sycamores, the non-profit provider selected by LA County Department of Mental Health for Service Planning Area (SPA) 4 Alternative Crisis Response services. West Hollywood is located in SPA 4.
3. Established plans and protocols for Care Team to provide on-scene support to

community members who are first served by LA County Sheriff's Department and/or LA County Fire Department. Also established plans to support community members engaged by West Hollywood Block by Block Security Ambassadors.

4. Produced West Hollywood Care Team brand kit.

The report concludes with updates on general areas of program development and identifies next steps to support program implementation and ongoing operations.

Action 1: *Formalized Care Team program design in close collaboration with the LA County Department of Mental Health's Alternative Crisis Response System and the 988 Suicide & Crisis Help Line operator for the Los Angeles region.*

Details: The West Hollywood Care Team is a behavioral health crisis response program that will provide in-person support and trauma-informed crisis stabilization services to community members. Once fully staffed, the program will operate 24/7/365, including holidays.

West Hollywood's approach to developing the Care Team program model in partnership with LA County Department of Mental Health's newly established Alternative Crisis Response System (ACR; est. 2022) marks the first city-county partnership of its kind. DMH leadership and City staff are working to integrate West Hollywood's Care Team service capacities into the DMH ACR system, allowing the City's program to most effectively and efficiently connect to the extensive mental health resources provided through DMH. West Hollywood is developing a city-specific program because the community's needs and response time expectations are higher than the baseline service levels offered by DMH to the Los Angeles region.

The first point of integration in the city-county program design is making the 988 Suicide & Crisis Help Line the main number for community members to call for help. 988 is operating and available to West Hollywood community members; crisis counselors are ready to support callers 24/7/365.

DMH funds the 988 Crisis Help Line operator serving the Los Angeles region. DMH conducted a request for proposals and selected the non-profit agency, Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services, to operate the program beginning in July 2022. Didi Hirsch is recognized

as a national leader in crisis counseling and suicide prevention and has operated the Southern California suicide prevention lifeline for decades. Historically, Didi Hirsch's phone-based crisis services are able to stabilize most callers; however, if phone-based counseling is insufficient, the 988 Crisis Counselor will request in-person services through the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (DMH) ACCESS Center.

This marks the second point of integration in the city-county program design. When a Didi Hirsch 988 crisis counselor requests an in-person response to an incident occurring in West Hollywood city limits, the DMH ACCESS Center will concurrently refer the West Hollywood Care Team to respond and dispatch a DMH-funded psychiatric evaluation team.

The Care Team will respond in person to address behavioral health crisis needs and determine if the community member can be stabilized safely in situ. Staff anticipates the majority of people will stabilize as a result of Care Team support. The Care Team will connect people to West Hollywood's contracted social service agencies for ongoing supportive services that can address the root cause/s of their crisis.

If additional acute mental health support is needed during the engagement, the Care Team will transfer services to the DMH mobile crisis evaluation team to conduct a mental health evaluation; this marks the third point of integration in the city-county design. If the DMH mobile crisis team determines more intensive care is needed, the community member will be transported to acute psychiatric services within the Los Angeles County DMH system.

City staff is collaborating with DMH to produce a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that formalizes the operational partnership related to in-person mobile response triaged through the DMH ACCESS Center. The MOU describes how continuity of care between the Care Team and DMH teams will be facilitated, which marks the fourth integration point in the city-county design. The MOU is currently in development and with City Council approval via this staff report, the City Manager will execute the MOU when available.

It is vitally important to note that the 988 system is in relative infancy compared to the more sophisticated communications architecture built around the 911 system. City staff continues to monitor known capacity constraints in the national 988 system related to

routing calls based on area code to the geographically closest 988 Suicide & Crisis Help Line operator. These constraints are detailed in the August 15, 2022, staff report. City staff has offered support to Didi Hirsch in their legislative advocacy efforts with the Federal Communications Commission to address this issue so that community members calling from West Hollywood with phone number area codes outside of the LA region can still be routed to Didi Hirsch in Los Angeles.

Action 2: *Established plan to enter a sole-source agreement for Care Team operations with Hathaway-Sycamores, the non-profit provider Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health selected to provide Service Planning Area (SPA) 4 Alternative Crisis Response services.*

Details: In May 2022, DMH requested proposals for mobile crisis outreach teams to scale up the County's Alternative Crisis Response (ACR) System in order to offer services 24/7/365. DMH selected the non-profit organization Hathaway-Sycamores (Sycamores) to operate mobile crisis outreach teams in SPA 4, where the City of West Hollywood is located. The City will piggyback on the DMH agreement as allowed by applicable laws and enter a sole-source agreement with Sycamores to operate the West Hollywood Care Team; this marks the fifth point of integration in the city-county design. The Care Team will function as a satellite to DMH's comprehensive ACR system, with staff roles on the Care Team that mirror select staff roles on Sycamore's DMH-funded mobile crisis outreach teams. The City is entering into this contract with Sycamores to increase service levels and improve arrival/response times to meet community needs and expectations.

Sycamores, headquartered in the Highland Park neighborhood of Los Angeles, has been caring for the community since 1902 and specializes in behavioral health services. Sycamore's organizational values align with the West Hollywood community, expressed in Sycamores' commitment to modeling and advocating for diversity, inclusion, justice, and equity. These values are also reflected in Sycamores' advocacy at the federal, state and county levels to build responsible policies, responsive systems and innovative trauma-informed practices.

Staff recommends proceeding with Sycamores as the agency is uniquely qualified and positioned to operate the West Hollywood Care Team and align the City's program with

County programs. Prior to producing this recommendation to the City Council, City staff conducted multiple engagements and conversations with the City's existing contracted and collaborative social service partners. Discussion topics ranged from Care Team program design, capacity for 24/7/365 operations, and feasibility of integrating with DMH. The City's contracted partners expressed support for the Care Team program, but advised the scope of proposed program operations exceeded current capacity.

The opportunity to proceed with Sycamores as the City's partner and operator for the Care Team will benefit the community because the organization has already been vetted and selected by DMH to operate mobile crisis outreach teams for the LA region's Alternative Crisis Response System. Sycamores is equipped to support the unique needs of the West Hollywood community, already operates 24/7, and stands on sophisticated organizational infrastructure to operate the Care Team program.

The contract agreement with Sycamores is for three years, and the budget is planned as follows: Year 1 - \$2,213,314; Year 2 - \$2,767,011; Year 3 - \$2,850,021 for a total not to exceed \$7,830,345. See Attachment B for the contract agreement, scope of work, and program budget. Inclusive in the contract and budget are one-time start-up capital expenses for Sycamores to purchase the necessary vehicles and equipment to create the Care Team infrastructure required to meet service demands. The funding source for the Care Team is the City of West Hollywood General Fund. Staff plans to continue researching viable external funding support and apply for grants that align with the City's program. The Care Team operational budget represents significant research and analysis by Strategic Initiatives staff to produce the most efficient program design and staffing model that enables 24/7/365 operations and makes prudent use of the City's budget and available funding.

The City's work to align with the LA County Department of Mental Health Alternative Crisis Response system enhances community member access to acute care. It enables the City to lean on DMH services when needed, including mental health clinicians and psychiatrists, ambulance transportation, and psychiatric receiving and treatment facilities. If these services were not accessible via DMH integration, the City would have needed to build these resources into the Care Team program budget.

Additionally, the integration with the 988 Suicide & Crisis Helpline also brings forward "always-on" phone-based crisis counseling and support, which is a huge benefit to the community at no cost to the City and enables community access to DMH's mobile crisis responders in addition to the Care Team. The integration with LA County Fire (described below) also enables the Care Team to operate without hiring Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs), which further reduces costs and liability in operating the Care Team.

Upon execution of the City's contract for services with Sycamores (anticipated July 1, 2023, with the Council's approval of this item), Sycamores will begin its recruitment process to hire and onboard the team. It is anticipated the first Care Team shift will be hired, trained, and working in the community in the Fall of 2023, contingent on. The Care Team will be staged to respond to requests for service dispatched from the DMH Access Center and requested by the City's first responders, as described in Action 3 below.

Action 3: *Established plans and protocols for Care Team to provide on-scene support to community members first served by the LA County Sheriff's Department and/or the LA County Fire Department. Also established plans to support West Hollywood Block by Block Security Ambassadors as a rapid response option when warranted.*

Details: The West Hollywood Care Team will serve as secondary support to the LA County Sheriff's Department (LASD) and/or the LA County Fire Department (LACoFD).

When Sheriff or Fire respond to a call for service in the community, they assess for behavioral health crisis needs. Currently, Sheriff and Fire request the West Hollywood Mental Evaluation Team (MET) to provide crisis support; MET is staffed by a highly trained licensed mental health clinician contracted through LA County DMH and a highly trained LA County Sheriff's Deputy. MET's co-response model will continue to provide an invaluable service to the community by enabling the City to offer clinical crisis support when a law enforcement presence is needed. Adding the West Hollywood Care Team will provide Sheriff and Fire the option to request behavioral health crisis support that does not involve law enforcement.

When Sheriff's Deputies or Fire personnel determine that the Care Team is needed for on-scene support, they will call the Care Team triage desk to request backup, and when the Care Team arrives, will facilitate a warm handoff to connect the community member

to Care Team staff.

The Care Team will engage and offer supportive services to help the community member de-escalate from their behavioral health crisis. The Care Team's conversation will also include linkages to community-based services to address unmet social service needs.

The design of the collaborative approach described above is intentional and was co-created with the Captain of the West Hollywood Sheriff's Station and Medical Directors at LA County Fire. As the Care Team is integrated into West Hollywood's first responder protocols, staff will coordinate to study the impact of this collaboration. The group will monitor how the partnership meets the needs of both housed and unhoused community members and any impacts on the volume of first responder calls to people in crisis who have underlying unmet chronic conditions that can be addressed through community-based health and social services.

Additionally, staff have briefed the City's Public Safety team and Block by Block leadership on the future capacity of the Care Team to provide behavioral health crisis response upon request of the West Hollywood Block by Block Security Ambassadors. This collaboration will create an additional option for the Ambassadors to request help without relying on West Hollywood Sheriff's Deputies to respond to behavioral health crises.

Action 4: *Produced West Hollywood Care Team brand kit.*

Details: Staff worked with Kilter to produce the brand kit for the West Hollywood Care Team. The brand kit will serve as the visual anchor for future communications and marketing strategies to promote the program and increase community awareness about the availability of crisis support services through 988 and the West Hollywood Care Team. Kilter incorporated many layers of feedback from the community, elected and appointed officials, City-contracted agencies, external mental health providers, and City staff. The consistent themes center on ensuring the Care Team brand is visually welcoming, warm, and non-stigmatizing. The design conveys that support, services, and care will be provided through this program. While service provision in the field will be subtle and discreet to be respectful of people in crisis (aka no lights/sirens, limited use of logos and uniforms), the promotion of the program to the community will be obvious and direct to

help establish and maintain community awareness about the service and benefit to the community.

Other Care Team Program Development Activities

Developing plans to provide Sycamores office space: City staff are working to identify suitable office space for Sycamores in city limits to ensure 24/7/365 access to a breakroom, restroom, and workspace infrastructure. Creating office space in the city will also reduce the time Sycamores' staff will need to travel to and from Sycamores' Highland Park headquarters.

Representing the City of West Hollywood in the development of LAC DMH's Hollywood 2.0: City staff are participating in local efforts to increase mental health services capacity in the greater Hollywood area. **"Hollywood 2.0"** is DMH's pilot project to provide comprehensive, community-based care and services to people experiencing mental illness and homelessness in the Hollywood community.

DMH's approach is inspired by the mental health care system in Trieste, Italy, which is internationally recognized for its human-centered and hospitality-oriented approach to meeting well-being needs while fostering a sense of autonomy and purpose to support personal recovery. Inspired by Trieste's approach, DMH has partnered with Hollywood 4WRD, a grassroots public-private coalition of stakeholders and service providers, to implement strategies to transform the Hollywood community into a model of care and engagement unparalleled in the U.S. This effort will benefit the West Hollywood community members experiencing homelessness who also spend time in Hollywood.

West Hollywood City staff joined the Hollywood 4WRD community workgroup in the spring of 2022, contributing time and expertise to inform program design and submitting a recommendation to DMH on the specific needs and considerations for a psychiatric urgent care facility to be located in Hollywood. As discussed in prior staff reports to City Council, staff are focused simultaneously on developing the West Hollywood Care Team while advancing the City's advocacy for expanded psychiatric care facilities to meet the community's most acute mental health needs.

Updating stakeholders on Care Team program development: Strategic Initiatives staff

continue to update key stakeholders on the development of the Care Team model and solicit feedback on the program design to support its successful launch and implementation. Since the last update, staff has briefed: The LA County Board of Supervisors Homeless Deputies, with an additional in-depth briefing to Supervisor Horvath's District 3 Health Deputy and Homeless Deputy, LAC CEO Homeless Initiative, DMH executive leadership, West Hollywood Homeless Collaborative members, internal City divisions and continued conversations with LASD and LACoFire.

Developing plans for accountability and transparency regarding Care Team program impact: The West Hollywood Care Team is a first-of-its-kind program for the City, so program implementation includes prioritizing plans for accountability and transparency about Care Team program metrics, outputs, and outcomes. Additionally, the projected impact of the Care Team aligns with, and advances, many efforts across the City, including the Community Safety and Wellbeing Strategy, Aging in Place/Aging in Community Initiative, and West Hollywood Homeless Initiative, which creates an opportunity to integrate Care Team outcome data into communication about those collective strategies.

The initial staff focus will be monitoring program metrics to optimize operations as the program builds towards 24/7/365 capacity. The Care Team will be administered by Strategic Initiatives Division staff, who will be in regular communication with Sycamores, LASD, LACoFire, and DMH.

To promote community insight into the Care Team program impact, staff intends to report to the community as follows during year one of program implementation:

Monthly community impact reports posted at www.weho.org/careteam

Bi-annual virtual community webinar reporting on Care Team services, question and answer sessions with the community

Annual updates to City Council integrated into the Community Safety and Wellbeing Strategy regular reporting process.

Ongoing online comment box available for community feedback.

Staff recommends this approach to facilitate accountability and transparency beginning

in year one and implementing any needed enhancements in the following year.

Developing plans for a sustained community awareness campaign about the Care Team: Given the Care Team program is a high priority in the City's Community Safety and Wellbeing Strategy, staff recommends contracting for professional communications services to support the City's plans for comprehensive community education and awareness campaigns about the availability of crisis services to support West Hollywood, community members. A comprehensive communications strategy required to establish and sustain community awareness over the long term. A significant investment will be critical to begin building momentum toward this goal. Staff recommends allocating an initial amount of \$200,000 towards communications activities to be used during Years 1-3 after the program launch to promote the Care Team, including information about support available through the 988 system.

Identifying need for general professional consulting services to support program administration: The Strategic Initiatives Division requires additional, sophisticated professional services bandwidth to administer and evaluate the West Hollywood Care Team. Given the program will be the first of its kind to support the community and involves the City of West Hollywood, DMH, LASD, and LACoFire, there is a significant docket of activities that need to be simultaneously managed, in addition to supporting the daily operations of the program in collaboration with Sycamores.

The City needs the capacity to manage relationships with key stakeholders, seek external funding support from philanthropic and government agencies, and build and sustain capacity for program evaluation, including, but not limited to, statistical analysis of program data, especially related to racial equity and social justice impacts. There is an opportunity to integrate further community feedback and participation in the ongoing operations of the Care Team, which could be facilitated through this role as well. Staff has provided a recommendation to the City Council to expand capacity in this way by approving up to \$200,000 to be used during the first three years of the program's operations.

Continuing to participate in the Harvard University Kennedy School of Government Performance Lab Alternative 911 Emergency Response Community of Practice: For the

past year, Strategic Initiatives Division staff have participated in a national community of practice group facilitated by the Harvard University Kennedy School of Government to learn from other cities and counties implementing alternative 911 response programs. Staff continues to bring lessons learned and emerging practices back to the development of the West Hollywood Care Team. Staff will continue participating in this workgroup as the Care Team is implemented.

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 measurement will be created as part of the implementation 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 Care Team 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 addressing homelessness and mental health services, 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 LA County Supervisorial District Three elected leadership and staff.

Staff reports and video presentations about the project are available online at www.weho.org/careteam 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 / HUMAN SERVICES DIVISION (as of July 1, 2023)

FISCAL IMPACT:

None. The proposed expenditure for the agreement and additional professional services, \$2,586,836, is included in the proposed City budget for fiscal year 2023-2024 in account 100-2-05-53-534130 Crisis Response.

AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION
\$2,186,836	Year 1 contract for services with Sycamores
\$200,000	Communications support for program implementation.
\$200,000	Professional services support for program implementation

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A: August 2022 Staff Report re: West Hollywood Care Team

Attachment B: Agreement for Services with Hathaway-Sycamores