

County of San Mateo Board of Supervisors

Date: January 24, 2001
To: Honorable Board of Supervisors
From: Supervisor Jerry Hill *JH*
Subject: Recognition of City Contributions for Safe Harbor

Background

Homelessness remains a serious issue in San Mateo County. Consider the following statistics:

- 4,600 men, women and children are homeless each year,
- Over 600 are homeless on a given night based on one-night counts conducted in February and in June 1999;
- Over 100 are on the street or living in cars each night;
- Of those that used the Emergency Winter Shelter at the San Mateo Armory last year, 45% stayed less than 5 days and only 10 percent stayed more than two months;
- Upon arrival at the shelter only, 10% of residents indicate they have a job. At the end of their stay, employment rises to 35% - 40%.

For the past thirteen years, the County had used the National Guard Armory in the city of San Mateo as the Emergency Winter Homeless Shelter. Traditionally, the emergency winter shelter run by Samaritan House is open from the Monday before Thanksgiving through the end of March to provide food and a place to sleep for 90 men and women.

In February 1999, the Human Service Agency Office of Housing began exploring alternatives to the San Mateo Armory site for housing the winter shelter. A few months later, the armory in San Bruno was considered and subsequently, exploration of citing the winter shelter began. In the Fall of 1999, after extensive community meetings it became apparent that the San Bruno Armory was no longer an option.

In December 1999, the County requested that cities in North County work together to find a site. Six months later, after countless leads, a site in South San Francisco on SanTrans property was identified as a viable option. In November of 2000, this Board

authorized construction of the new facility On December 15, 2000, the County opened Safe Harbor, the brand new Emergency Winter Homeless Shelter in South San Francisco.

Due to difficulty in locating a site, the speed with which the facility had to be constructed, and environmental concerns, the total cost for the project was \$2.1 million, much higher than anticipated. Budget overruns were covered by County reserves. In order to help defray the costs, all cities in San Mateo County were asked to make a one-time capital contribution for Safe Harbor.

The following cities have contributed or pledged financial support for Safe Harbor:

Belmont	\$10,000
Burlingame	\$30,000
Colma	\$10,000
Foster City	\$20,000
Menlo Park	\$10,000
Pacifica	\$15,000
San Bruno	\$25,000
San Carlos	\$10,000
San Mateo	\$29,000
South San Francisco	\$30,000
Woodside	\$10,000

In addition, upon hearing of the opening of Safe Harbor and speaking with County staff, Ms. Carolyn Parsons of San Jose donated \$5,000 for the shelter.

We want to recognize and commend Ms. Parsons and cities of San Mateo County that have so generously contributed to helping our homeless population.