



# MEMORANDUM

**TO:** City Council

**FROM:** Joseph A. Melder, City Manager 

**SUBJECT:** Feasibility of Expanding Homelessness Street Outreach and Shelter Intake Services After 9pm and on Sundays

**DATE:** July 8, 2025

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This memorandum is to respond to City Council's inquiry regarding the feasibility of expanding daily homelessness street outreach and shelter intake services beyond the 9pm evening hour daily and with the addition of Sundays.

## **Background Information**

In 2023, City Council approved contracts with Union Mission and Chatham Savannah Authority for the Homeless (CSAH) to provide coordinated services to persons experiencing homelessness. These services included the opening and management of Union Mission's Day Center which provides case management and supportive services, and the expansion of CSAH's street outreach program which includes the provision of transportation.

While both programs provide critical services to individuals in need, an ongoing barrier that was identified was the lack of coordinated services after 5pm on weekdays and 3pm on Saturdays. This service gap is noted in the Five-Year Strategic Plan to End Homelessness, recently adopted by the Inter-Agency Council on Homelessness and the City of Savannah.

In 2024, the City's Human Services Department worked with CSAH to extend street outreach services to 9pm on weekdays. However, street outreach staff were not able to consistently connect individuals to shelter services which close at 5pm on weekdays and do not accept intakes on weekends.

To address the gaps in services, the City issued two Request for Proposals to address two separate but related needs – 1) an extension of outreach and transportation services for six days a week, Monday through Saturday, until 9pm *and* 2) an extension of emergency shelter intake services for the same operating period.

On June 26<sup>th</sup>, the City Council agenda recommended approval of contracts with CSAH for extended street outreach services and Union Mission for extended emergency shelter intake.

## **Feasibility of Extending Operating Hours Beyond 9pm and Including Sundays**

Following the June 26<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting, Human Services staff consulted with the CSAH and Union Mission, Inc. regarding each agency's capacity to expand services and the associated costs.

- Extending Services to Sundays
  - **Chatham Savannah Authority for the Homeless:** CSAH advised the City that the agency can extend services to include Sundays with the addition of one full-time position at a cost of \$63,388 (incl. salary and benefits). This would increase the contract total from \$273,715 to \$337,103. It is important to note that other partner resources are not available during the late evening and weekend hours and services will be limited to available emergency shelter beds.
  - **Union Mission:** The agency is able to extend emergency shelter services to Sundays with the addition of two part-time employee at a cost of \$37,305 (incl. salaries and benefits). This would increase the contract from \$97,678 to \$134,983. It should be noted that intake will be limited based on bed availability and up to 10 additional cots. Services are also limited to individuals, as there is no capacity to intake families under this contract.
- Extending Services beyond 9pm
  - Both agencies expressed concerns and did not recommend extending services beyond 9pm due to safety concerns for staff out during late night hours, the danger of approaching encampments unannounced, disturbing individuals who are sleeping, the limited availability of shelter space, and lower staffing levels at shelters while people are sleeping.

### **Summary**

Total costs to extend both contracts to Sundays is \$472,086, which includes an additional \$100,693 that is not budgeted. Both agencies are prepared to move forward with extended intake and outreach services on Sundays, however, the implementation timeline will need to be flexible over the next 30-45 days to allow agencies to hire and onboard new staff.