

# RASPBERRY COURT

## From Homelessness to Healthy Community Member A Coordinated Site-Development Plan September 25, 2013

### Background

On March 18, 2013, the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) announced the availability of 131 acres of surplus property for disposal at the end of Raspberry Road, just before entrance to Kincaid Park. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) determined that the property was suitable for facilities to assist the homeless under the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (42 USC 11411), which provides priority consideration for proposals submitted under this intent.

Considering the scarcity of buildable land, the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) submitted two proposed uses for the surplus property. One proposal was for MOA Public Works and one for MOA Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). The Public Works application was to acquire one parcel of land, 65.41 acres for a storm water treatment plant; and, the DHHS application was for 65.59 acres to develop land to serve the homeless.

The DHHS proposal identifies several key collaborative partners in the community who are very interested in developing co-located services on site to serve the homeless. The site will also support prevention strategies to serve the MOA and the State of Alaska.

The MOA carefully considered this opportunity before proposing uses for the land. But, clearly the number of those at-risk of becoming homeless and those experiencing homelessness has risen progressively over the past few years. Since 2009, the Mayor has convened two different groups, the Mayor's Homeless Leadership Team (HLT) and the Mayor's Kitchen Cabinet (MKC), to specifically look into reducing homelessness and increasing community safety. Both groups brought recommendations to increase affordable housing, increase case management, and increase treatment services. Additionally, due to the significant percentage of homeless persons who also have disabilities (such as substance abuse and mental health disorders) in 2007 the MOA began working with the State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) and the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (Trust) to develop future plans. The plan envisions a center offering treatment and wrap-around services for homeless persons, focusing on persons experiencing substance abuse.

The DHHS proposed use is a response to HLT and MKC recommendations, and planning efforts between the MOA, DHSS and the Trust to serve the homeless or at-risk of homelessness in Anchorage and the State. The proposal addresses the growing need for affordable housing and services to curb the high percentages of homelessness. These needs are documented through numerous reports, including: the MOA's Consolidated Plan; the Anchorage Housing Market Analysis; and The Economic Costs of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse in Alaska, 2012 Update.

### Overview of Raspberry Court

The DHHS proposal envisions Raspberry Court as a multi-service campus for those at-risk of becoming or already experiencing homelessness. The long range strategy is to deliver comprehensive, high quality systems of care through health and wellness (physical and mental) services, housing, life skills training, and workforce development. The result is a safe housing and service community model, which enables individuals and families to attain greater degrees of wellness and self sufficiency. This model addresses the root causes of homelessness and individual development to self-sufficiency.

Raspberry Court has three main objectives: 1) Individual Wellness, 2) Housing, and 3) Workforce Development. Raspberry Court is unique in that it coordinates and co-locates service providers from throughout Anchorage to one site to deliver a continuum of services. Preventative services will be available to those at-risk of homelessness through counseling, outpatient therapy, and workforce development. Those experiencing homelessness will be assessed and a plan developed individually, depending on whether homelessness is situational or chronic. Raspberry Court will also serve greater Alaska through tele-medicine and tele-counseling, thus reducing the need for individuals to relocate to Anchorage in order to access services.

Raspberry Court will span over nearly 66 acres, preserving natural trail systems, wetlands, and other natural habitats. The service campus to the North of Raspberry Road will be available to individuals and families with service appointments and/or those working with case managers from, or outside of, Anchorage and across the state. Permanent supportive housing will be located to the South of Raspberry Road. The campus, including housing, will be: a **dry** environment; will include 24 hour/day security; and no camping will be allowed on or near the property. Individuals at risk of becoming homeless, veterans, chronically homeless, disabled homeless (may have substance abuse disorder, mental health disorder, or physical impairment); individuals who have become homeless due to domestic violence, and other individuals impacted by homelessness will be served through Raspberry Court.

The campus is comprised of four housing structures, an administrative building, an activity space for physical exercise, a health center, a maintenance structure, warehouse, laundry, conference center and a kitchen and dining room that will occupy the only existing building on the site.

Main phases of the project are expected to be constructed and occupied within 36 months of the date of deed transfer. Estimations are for 2016 or 2017 occupancy. Other building plans are expected to be completed in future years. The main phase includes two 48-occupant housing buildings for a total of 96 residents, the renovated food service building, the administration building and the health center. Future development include two additional 48-occupant housing buildings for a total campus housing population of 196 individuals, as well as a warehouse, laundry facility, conference/training center, recreational center, maintenance facility, and cultural hall.

If the DHHS proposal is accepted, the MOA's role will be to own and lease the land.

### **Benefits to Anchorage and Alaska by Raspberry Court:**

- Create additional housing stock in the Anchorage bowl, which has very little "buildable" land and offer developers the option to collaborate for a common goal: reducing homelessness through an affordable housing plan
- Replace the outdated Clitheroe building and relocate services to the new campus; or, determine if some treatment services can be located at other existing service sites (i.e., Ernie Turner, Akeela)
- Reduce strain on healthcare and emergency services in Anchorage, including the Anchorage Police Department, Anchorage Fire Department, the Alaska Psychiatric Institute, and hospital emergency rooms
- Establish a continuum of services to move homeless individuals from overburdened emergency care to self-sufficiency in affordable housing
- Increase commerce by simultaneously giving individuals job skills and employment through work development
- Co-locate services, allowing for economies of scale to be gained for providers by supporting a more effective and efficient coordinated system of care
- Centralize and provide options for immediate care services, as well as information and referral to mainstream services
- Offer tele-medicine and tele-counseling to Alaskan communities that do not have systems in place to address the needs of those at-risk of becoming or are experiencing homelessness
- Reduce not just the number of overall homeless, but specifically the chronic homeless population
- Provide a safe haven with wrap around recovery services for those who are victims of assault and/or domestic violence
- Offer a system of care for individuals and families who are at-risk of becoming homeless through preventative services
- Produce additional employment opportunities for Anchorage and Alaska residents at the campus through service program development and expansion