Board of Supervisors' Ad Hoc Committee on Housing and Homelessness Programs in concert with the Chief Administrative Office, Health and Human Services Agency, and the Sheriff's Office recommending the Board:
1) Receive a presentation on and approve the revised conservative project timeline as outlined in Attachment A, that includes an estimated close of services at 299 ~~Forni Road~~ Fair Lane in March 2027 and the continued exploration of services at 300 Forni Road;
2) Authorize staff to complete an environmental analysis of the contemplated project as outlined in the timeline while pursuing ways to reduce the timeline for a potential build at 300 Forni Road; and
3) Delegate authority to the Purchasing Agent to execute agreements, not to exceed $500,000 cumulatively, for architectural, planning, and environmental services for the 300 Forni Road site, contingent upon approval by County Counsel and Risk Management.

FUNDING: State and Federal Housing and Homelessness Funding, State and Federal Behavioral Health Funding, and General Fund from pandemic-related funding and from the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians related to the Indian Creek Ranch Subdivision.

DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND

History

On July 1, 2021, the City of Placerville requested the County identify two members of the Board of Supervisors to discuss issues relative to homelessness within city limits with two members of the Placerville City Council. On July 13, 2021, with Legistar file 21-1125, the Board appointed Supervisors Thomas and Hidahl to the "Two-by-Two" meeting. Over the next months, the Board directed that staff explore the development of an emergency homeless shelter to reduce fire danger from active encampments, particularly following the Caldor Fire and its devastation. On November 9, 2021, with Legistar file 21-1668, the Board of Supervisors directed HHSA to work with El Dorado Opportunity Knocks (EDOK) to assess potential sites for a Navigation Center with an emergency shelter component, or a Pallet community, to be run by a professional service provider.

On September 20, 2022, with Legistar file 22-1693, the Board decided to utilize the dormant juvenile hall located at 299 Fair Lane as a temporary navigation center until a permanent one could be constructed at 300 Fair Lane, Placerville. The Board also directed staff to prepare architectural and design drawings, as well as cost estimates to construct a permanent navigation center at 300 Fair Lane.

On February 7, 2023, the temporary navigation center opened at 299 Fair Lane. In the first two years of operation, there were 339 participants that utilized the navigation center. In the second year of operation, the average length of stay was 62 days and of the 60 beds, on average 93% were filled, 35% exits from the Navigation Center were to permanent housing, nine percentage points higher than the state average of 26% for all homeless programs, not just Emergency Shelter. Over the first two years of operation, staff learned a lot about the needs of the homeless population in El Dorado County. Navigation center participants are on average 50 years old with the largest subset of all participants being between the ages of 55 and 64 years old.

To increase the number of individuals served who move into permanent housing, the County determined a need for transitional housing that serves as the next step after the navigation center where residents can live more independently while still receiving support services. On May 21, 2024, with Legistar file 24-0940, the Board directed staff to develop a permanent navigation center with stand-alone transitional housing units at 300 Forni Road, an approximately one-acre site adjacent to the Placerville Jail and pause all progress on developing a permanent navigation center at 300 Fair Lane. Additionally, the Board directed staff to develop a temporary family area at the temporary navigation center with the option to include temporary transitional housing, if feasible, at 300 Fair Lane to serve the community while developing the permanent navigation center site. The Board also directed staff to continue to conduct outreach meetings with the City of Placerville, businesses and residents near the proposed site, and other stakeholders for input on program and site design for the permanent navigation center; and to negotiate a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the City of Placerville to mitigate the impacts of the navigation center and coordinate City and County efforts and return to the Board for approval of the MOU.

After approval of the 300 Forni Road navigation center project in May 2024, staff developed an updated topographic site survey, surveyed underground utilities including fire and domestic water and sanitary sewer, and performed a conceptual test fit analysis. Any facility at 300 Forni Road cannot be fully constructed until the completion of the Jail Expansion Project that is currently underway. It is currently estimated that the Jail Expansion Project will be complete by Fall 2026 or Winter 2027.

Additionally on May 20, 2025, with Legistar file 25-0939, the Board authorized the application and eventual approval of a California Department of Health Care Services Bond Behavioral Health Continuum Infrastructure Program (BHCIP) Program Round 1 grant, in the estimated award amount of $24,000,000 for an infrastructure expansion to provide improved management for complex mental health and substance abuse cases at a centralized, easily accessible location. This expansion is termed the Service, Outreach, Access, and Response (SOAR) Project. The project will be at 299 Fair Lane, where the temporary navigation center is currently. The SOAR Project will provide the essential funding needed to facilitate the relocation and expansion of HHSA’s psychiatric health facility (PHF), currently located at 935B Spring Street, Placerville and renovate the lower floor of the property to house County staff from Outpatient Mental Health, Veterans’ Services, Self-Sufficiency, Substance Abuse, Public Guardian, and Protective Services. The BHCIP funding must be spent by June 30, 2030. The project will require a major overhaul of the site, and the site must be vacant before construction can begin, due to safety concerns and project costs. In order to reduce the risk of losing funding or not completing the project on time, the temporary navigation center would need to be vacated by March 2027 for construction of the SOAR project. Based upon the timelines of the Jail Expansion Project and the SOAR Project, the navigation center will need to be closed for the SOAR Project before a facility located at 300 Forni Road facility could be completed.

On September 23, 2025, with Legistar file 25-1304, the Board approved a recommendation from the Housing and Homelessness Ad Hoc to develop a plan for housing with integrated behavioral health treatment at 300 Forni Road, replacing the existing model for a housing first/low barrier Navigation Center, using discretionary resources already allocated to the Navigation Center and Behavioral Health funding; and to develop a plan to transition the temporary navigation center, at 299 Fair Lane, into the facility at 300 Forni Road, which may include reducing the capacity of the facility, and includes continued security efforts around the Government Center.

Current Plan

After conceptual approval of the revised Behavioral Health service-focused plan for 300 Forni Road, staff from HHSA created workgroups to rapidly develop a plan for this site including fiscal structure, service planning, intake and discharge process, community engagement, and legal and policy development and review. Over the past four months these workgroups have been developing a plan for moving forward with this site. This included meeting with 15 different stakeholder groups for feedback and program input. Staff conducted a voluntary survey of current clients at the Navigation Center. Of the 55 clients surveyed, 32 (58%) reported a behavioral health diagnosis or concern and 53 (96%) stated they would be willing to engage in a treatment-based model.

Staff have determined that there is currently $5.75 million available for the build of the facilities at 300 Forni Road. This includes Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA); Opioid Settlement; Public Health Realignment; discretionary funding from the American Rescue Plan Act, Tribe, and other pandemic-related funding. This is a tentative funding plan for the new site, as some of these funding sources require approval from other stakeholders and/or a community planning process.

The site will be a campus of dwelling units for residential use with a separate area for families and an area for residents without children. This campus of smaller units will maximize funding for operation of the site while minimizing licensing and compliance costs. It is anticipated that the site at 300 Forni Road will not house more than 30 people, with units housing six or fewer residents. The 300 Forni site will have a separate service structure which will support offering the following expanded services: Medication Support, Targeted Case Management, Individual and Group Therapy, Mobile Crisis Services, Medication Assisted Treatment, Narcotic Treatment Program Coordination, and Full-Service Partnerships. Staff continue to research all evidenced-based practices that will improve long-term housing success.

Ongoing operations of the 300 Forni site will be funded with BHSA, Transitional Rent, Realignment, Opioid Settlement, Medi-Cal and Drug Medi-Cal and Mental Health Service Act fund balance funding. These funding sources are the most stable funding that is currently available for the ongoing operations of the site. This is a tentative funding plan, as some of these funding sources have funding requirements like a community planning process or specific billing requirements.

Funding for Housing First, low barrier homeless services isn’t a stable, ongoing funding source. It is anticipated the funding for the Navigation Center at 299 Fair Lane will be exhausted in Spring 2027. In addition, the SOAR project necessitates vacating the Fair Lane site in March 2027. Staff will develop a transition plan for the closure of the Navigation Center and minimize the impact to the clients and the community.

The prior plan was exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review as it was a low-barrier Navigation Center as outlined in Government Code 65660-65666. The CEQA review process can take anywhere from six - eighteen months. The full design of the project cannot not be completed until the CEQA review process is complete. Staff are working to identify applicable CEQA exemptions to help streamline the build of the 300 Forni Road site. The recommended CEQA process for 300 Forni Road site cannot be defined until the site plan is further developed and compared to established and new CEQA exemptions. Staff from HHSA, Facilities, Chief Administrative Office, and County Counsel will continue to identify the recommended CEQA review process. Staff will return to the Board for project and CEQA approval.

The attached timeline (Attachment A) shows high-level timelines for the BHCIP, Jail Expansion, 300 Forni, and 299 Fair Lane Navigation Center facilities. These timelines are conservative timelines and hopefully parts of the project can be completed faster than projected. Per the timeline, the 299 Fair Lane navigation center will close in March 2027 and the 300 Forni Road site will be operational in mid-2028. This timeline is an estimate and is contingent on CEQA and project approval by the Board.

Next Steps

HHSA will need to secure ongoing operational funding and define the program components and processes. This will include ensuring the project is included in the BHSA Plan that will be brought to the Board this Spring. Staff will need to ensure all program components will allow for Medi-Cal billing and other behavioral health funding sources. HHSA staff will need to develop a closure plan for 299 Fair Lane. The closure plan for 299 Fair Lane will try to minimize the number of people who return to homelessness and include coordination with law enforcement, the City of Placerville, and local businesses to minimize the impacts of the closure around 299 Fair Lane.

HHSA and Facilities will work with an architect to develop the site plan for the revised programming and target population. These site plans will be used to draft the documents needed for the CEQA review process. After CEQA review and design of the site is complete, staff will return to the Board for project and CEQA approval. Then there will be a formal solicitation for construction bids and then construction.

Requested Board Action

Staff are requesting the Board approve the revised conservative project timeline as outlined in Attachment A, that includes an estimated close of services at 299 Forni Road in March 2027 and the continued exploration of services at 300 Forni Road. If this timeline is approved, staff will start spending time and resources on developing this project and return to the Board for further approval as outlined above.

Staff are also requesting the Board delegate authority to the Purchasing Agent to execute agreements, not to exceed $500,000 cumulatively, for architectural, planning, and environmental services for the 300 Forni Road site, contingent upon approval by County Counsel and Risk Management. Delegating authority for these agreements will reduce the processing time to proceed with the project, helping to ensure adherence to the timeline presented.

ALTERNATIVES

The Board could direct that staff to pursue an alternate plan or program structure, most alternative program models would likely require additional discretionary funding.

PRIOR BOARD ACTION

See above.

OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

See above.

CAO RECOMMENDATION / COMMENTS

Approve as recommended and provide direction to staff.

FINANCIAL IMPACT
The $500,000 in funding for architectural, planning, and environmental services for the 300 Forni Road site will be funded by General Fund from pandemic-related funding. The updated funding plan for the remainder of the build of the 300 Forni Road site will be included in FY 2026-27 Budget.

CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS
N/A

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT
By approving this item, the Board will be working toward the strategic plan priority to “Develop a continuum of support and housing opportunities for unhoused individuals.”

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