



South Bend Common Council

227 W, Jefferson Blvd. Room 441 - County-City Building, South Bend, IN 46601

The Collective Power of Engagement & Intentional Collaboration

August 22, 2019

YOUTH SERVICE BUREAU OF ST. JOSEPH COUNTY PARTNERSHIP PROPOSAL

1. A description of proposed plan and how it relates to the Common Council/City's basic purpose and mission:

Youth Service Bureau (YSB) now owns a 15-acre, undeveloped site near the corner of Hickory Rd. and McKinley Ave. in South Bend, adjacent to the footprint of the former Target store. This land could be a mixed-use project with market rate and affordable housing, multi-family entry-level housing and commercial development at the edges of the site. The site is located on a Transpo line and is walking distance to the Town & County Shopping Center, a park, and provides easy access to healthcare, education, and employment opportunities. This site is a potential growth opportunity for the city of South Bend and for YSB. YSB would consolidate their facilities to improve service delivery to youth in South Bend and improve operational efficiency. There is a shortage of sites for large scale development and this site has potential for a mixed-use commercial/residential development.

YSB has served tens of thousands of teenagers and young adults (and their children) who have been homeless or at-risk of homelessness, living in poverty, and who faced an uncertain future without the support of family or other caring adults. The agency began as a department of the City of South Bend in 1972 and became an independent nonprofit in 1985.

Today, YSB offers a continuum of vital services including emergency shelter; a drop-in center, trauma-informed crisis counseling; case management; street outreach and prevention services; transitional living and other housing options, and behavioral intervention services in public schools. YSB services are an indispensable alternative to involving teenagers and young adults with law enforcement, child protection, mental health, and juvenile justice systems.

YSB is the only agency in South Bend and the surrounding area entirely focused on the needs of teenagers and young adults. In support of the Common Council/City's basic purpose and mission, we believe our entire community thrives when all young people have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

2. **Why this plan is needed:**

Youth homelessness is a serious but often overlooked problem in the City of South Bend. Homeless teens and young adults are not usually found sleeping on park benches or the streets as we may see many homeless adults. Rather they are our community's invisible homeless population, out of sight, undercounted for years, mobile and transient, "couch surfing" with friends and even strangers. The South Bend School Corporation reported that more than 300 students identified as homeless in 2018, and we believe that is just the tip of the iceberg.

YSB's current facilities have been stretched beyond capacity to meet this unprecedented demand for services and provide the level of support that our young people need – and our community deserves. In addition, supportive and affordable housing options are extremely limited in the city for youth who are transitioning out of homelessness and require safe, stable housing.

YSB currently operates out of three scattered, aging residential buildings, some nearly 100 years old, that are ill equipped to continue to support the services that teens and young adults need to thrive. And while YSB has done an exceptional job of maximizing its resources over the past 47 years, it cannot continue to run multiple programs out of buildings that were neither designed to support them, nor are large enough to meet increasing demand. Operating from multiple locations across St. Joseph County has also created safety, logistical, technological, and financial inefficiencies that are negatively affecting operations.

In response, YSB plans to create a new neighborhood campus near the corner of Hickory Rd. and McKinley Ave. in South Bend that will house a broad range of programs and function as a "one-stop shop" providing a continuum of services—from prevention to housing—to support youth who are in crisis and/or struggling with homelessness. Anchored by a new facility, the YSB Center for Youth Success, this project will be the first of its kind in St. Joseph County and will support the continuum of care we provide today and give us the infrastructure necessary to continue evolving to meet the needs of our community in the future.

With flexible spaces in the new building and 15 acres of land to use, there are many opportunities to keep adapting and expanding to better serve youth and to meet the changing needs of the broader community. Opportunities for future development that would meet the needs of our clients and the surrounding neighborhood could include a childcare center, supportive and affordable housing, multifamily housing and commercial space. *Please see the attached survey of the site.*

We know that young people who experience homelessness are five times more likely than their peers to become homeless adults. Successfully intervening with homeless and at-risk youth before they turn age 25 is an essential window of opportunity we cannot afford to miss. If we do, many of today's homeless youth are almost certain to be tomorrow's homeless adults. This will result in not just greater financial costs for our community, but the catastrophic—and all too avoidable—loss of human potential.

3. The human and financial resources needed to implement the plan (in detail):

Unfortunately, because they're not seen, homeless youth have been relegated to the end of the queue to receive the resources they need. Youth homelessness continues to be a low priority for local, state and federal funding as a disproportionately large amount of public support has been directed to the higher profile, costlier population of chronically homeless adults

YSB is seeking funding from the City of South Bend to complete our \$6.2M capital project. The initial phase of the project is to build the YSB Center for Youth Success. Programs included in this building would be homeless YSB's emergency youth (doubling the number YSB can serve in their current facility) dorm-style transitional housing, transitional housing apartments for young mothers, a drop-in center, the Young Moms Self-Sufficiency Program, computer lab, flex space, commercial kitchen for a social enterprise, recreation space and YSB administration team. The City could provide funding for the transitional housing and infrastructure/streets on the new site which we estimate will cost \$1.6M. *Attached is a detailed budget for the first phase of this project.*

4. What will this mean to the Common Council/City in opportunities and cost in 1 to three years:

This site offers a growth opportunity for the city of South Bend. If the site is developed with housing for youth experiencing homelessness, the YSB Center for Youth Success, and new affordable market rate housing, this would strengthen the city. The proposed YSB Center for Youth Success, accessible by public transportation, will house a broad range of programs and services and will function as a "one-stop shop" providing a continuum of services—from prevention to housing—to support youth who are in crisis and/or struggling with homelessness. Opportunities for youth will result in less future homelessness. More affordable and market rate housing will bring new residents to the city and future population growth. South Bend needs new development and this site is well situated to support that growth.

5. An alternative plan/other options:

This project could be funded in phases. The initial phase would involve the construction of the Youth Service Bureau Center for Youth Success with the shelter and the dormitory/transitional housing facility for young adults.

YSB also would appreciate the city participation of city officials and staff in the creation of a conceptual plan for the entire site. We realize that city participation does not guarantee funding but constructive input is always appreciated.