



MAYOR & COUNCIL MEMORANDUM

February 18, 2026

Subject: Update on Strategic Initiatives Related to Unsheltered Homelessness (City Wide)

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Issue – Time has been set aside at the request of Mayor Regina Romero to provide an update on the efforts to support unsheltered persons and how the City is addressing the concerns expressed by residents and business owners in Tucson.

City Manager's Office Recommendation – No action is required by the Mayor and Council as part of the Study Session item; however, Mayor and Council can provide feedback and direction on the update.

Background – The ongoing needs and challenges of addressing the unsheltered, and impacts of various encampments, have been a priority for Mayor and Council. Staff were directed to provide monthly updates on efforts to address unsheltered homelessness and the opioid public health crisis.

Present Consideration(s):

The City of Tucson, in partnership with regional agencies and community stakeholders, continues implementing a coordinated, data-driven strategy that integrates housing stabilization, public safety, and service engagement. Central to this work is the Safe City Initiative, which aligns targeted enforcement, proactive outreach, environmental remediation, and service coordination to address high-impact areas while connecting individuals experiencing homelessness to shelter, treatment, and housing pathways.

Through the Tucson Pima Collaboration to End Homelessness (TPCH), Safe City deployments, expanded Transition Center services, and low-barrier shelter operations, the City is advancing both humanitarian and public safety objectives in a balanced and measurable manner.

This report highlights progress in four key areas:

1. Federal funding stabilization and system performance
2. Strategic outreach and enforcement outcomes
3. Expansion of transition and crisis response capacity
4. Current shelter system utilization and housing pathways

Despite federal funding uncertainty and increasing system demand, the region's homeless response system has demonstrated improved efficiency, increased service engagement, and sustained public safety outcomes.

Tucson Pima Collaboration to End Homelessness (TPCH) Update

The Continuum of Care (CoC) Funding process that U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has attempted to roll out has been problematic. As a result, there have been ongoing federal legal challenges related to HUD's Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). As a

summary, since November 2025, HUD issued NOFO, rescinded it, reissued a similar NOFO, and later re-opened the prior year's NOFO due to court injunctions. TPCCH successfully navigated this evolving federal process and submitted funding applications for four renewal projects and the remaining projects will receive continued funding. Award announcements are anticipated in March 2026. Final court rulings are expected by the end of February. Despite instability at the federal level, TPCCH ensured funding continuity for core programs serving vulnerable residents.

The 2026 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count

HUD requires that every Continuum of Care jurisdiction hold an annual point in time count, for Tucson/Pima County, this effort was conducted January 28, 2026. Nearly 400 community volunteers participated and members of Mayor and Council and staff contributed directly. Data is currently undergoing HUD-required cleaning and validation. Final results will be publicly released later this year. TPCCH manages this large-scale event and report that the strong volunteer turnout reflects continued community engagement and commitment to understanding the scope of unsheltered homelessness in Pima County.

Longitudinal System Analysis (LSA): System Performance

While the PIT Count provides a one-night snapshot, the Longitudinal System Analysis (LSA) measures year-long system performance, this TPCCH effort has results to report for FY 2025:

- 5,969 individuals served
- 4,349 households assisted
- 9% increase in people served compared to FY2024 (nearly 500 additional individuals)
- Average length of time homeless decreased from 106 days (FY24) to 89 days (FY25)

Key Takeaway:

Demand for services increased significantly, yet the system improved efficiency and reduced the average duration of homelessness by 17 days. This reflects expanded capacity, improved coordination, and more effective housing placements. Additional LSA data will be released publicly in the coming months.

TPCCH Strategic Plan Adoption

On February 12, the TPCCH General Council adopted its new five-year Strategic Plan. The Plan accomplished the following:

- Establishes measurable goals and action steps
- Developed through broad community collaboration
- Includes input from healthcare providers, elected officials, service providers, and residents
- Aligns regional efforts around prevention, housing expansion, and system performance

Adoption of the plan marks a transition from planning to implementation. TPCCH looks forward to continued partnership with Mayor and Council to operationalize these goals.

100 Acres Follow-Up

At the December 16 meeting, Council requested long-term outcomes for six individuals moved from the 100 Acres site into permanent housing. These six individuals were part of 72 people engaged through the TPCCH Unsheltered Initiative and referred to housing. While those individuals were successfully placed in housing when the site closed, TPCCH and the Safe City implementation team

are developing a process to provide Mayor and Council with longer-term outcome tracking for those who are unsheltered.

Safe City Deployment – Operation Clear Path

Operation Clear Path is a structured Safe City deployment model coordinated by the Multiagency Resource Coordinator, aligning City departments, law enforcement, and service providers to address high-impact locations through outreach, accountability, and environmental stabilization.

Deployment Summary (December 10, December 17, January 21)

- 54 total contacts
- 27 services accepted (50% acceptance rate)
- Services included shelter placement, housing intake, detox services, and medication-assisted treatment (MAT)
- Approximately 2.5 tons of debris removed
- Multiple arrests, warrant bookings, and new charges addressing public safety concerns
- The 50% service acceptance rate reflects meaningful engagement in environments where voluntary service uptake can be challenging.

As deployments continue, service acceptance is increasing, indicating that coordinated enforcement combined with consistent outreach is building trust and improving engagement. Staff will continue strategic deployments to maintain public safety, reduce neighborhood impacts, and connect individuals with services.

Safe City Enforcement Deployment– River Path & Washes

On December 8, 2025, Safe City Deployment #7 along the Santa Cruz River (Grant to Cushing) resulted in 14 arrests, 22 new criminal charges (18 misdemeanors and 4 felonies), and the service of 36 warrants. Following this focused enforcement effort, sustained maintenance operations helped stabilize the area, reducing the need for additional large-scale enforcement deployments.

From November 22, 2025 through January 15, 2026, structured maintenance efforts along the Rillito River (Oracle to 1st Avenue) resulted in 135 contacts, 45 new criminal charges, and 36 warrants served. Officers also issued 18 verbal warnings and received 32 community appreciation comments, reflecting improved conditions and positive neighborhood response.

Together, these efforts demonstrate that targeted enforcement combined with ongoing maintenance can achieve stabilization, accountability, and measurable community impact while reducing the need for repeated large-scale operations.

Transition Center Expansion

The Pima County Transition Center is preparing to expand operations since being awarded Opioid Settlement Funding and will extend operations to seven days per week 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m.

Projected Timeline:

- Hiring and onboarding complete: February to March
- Full operations launch: April 1, 2026
- Staffing additions include: four additional County staff and one City-funded Crisis Navigator

This expansion significantly increases diversion capacity, crisis response access, and housing navigation support.

Shelter System Overview

The City owns and partners in the operation of low-barrier emergency shelters and continues working collaboratively to ensure coordinated shelter access and clear pathways to housing.

Current Capacity and Utilization:

- Wildcat Inn – 91 adults and children
- Desert Cove (CBI) – 21 adults (behavioral health focus)
- Craycroft Shelter (County-operated) – 121 adults and children
- Amphi Housing Resource Center (OPCS) – 49 adults
- Bread & Roses Transitional Housing (OPCS) – 5 of 8 transitional beds filled + 1 emergency bed
- Star Village (Primavera Foundation) – 20 individuals

These sites provide emergency shelter, behavioral health stabilization, housing navigation, and transitional housing support.

Overall Impact Summary

Across systems, the region is demonstrating:

- Increased system capacity (9% more individuals served)
- Improved efficiency (17-day reduction in average length of homelessness)
- Strong service engagement (50% acceptance during outreach deployments)
- Sustained environmental stabilization in high-impact corridors
- Expansion of transition and crisis services
- Adoption of a new five-year strategic plan

While challenges remain, including federal funding uncertainty and increasing service demand, the integration of the Safe City Initiative with TPCCH system coordination is producing measurable results. Targeted enforcement combined with proactive outreach and sustained maintenance has stabilized high-impact corridors, increased service acceptance, reduced repeat enforcement needs, and strengthened community confidence.

The City's balanced approach, coupling housing placement and crisis response expansion with strategic public safety deployments, demonstrates that coordinated, multi-agency action can improve neighborhood conditions while advancing long-term housing stability for Tucson's most vulnerable residents.

Plan Tucson Consideration(s) – This item supports the following Plan Tucson policies:

Housing 6 -Support stable, accessible housing or shelter throughout the city, with no or few barriers to entry for those experiencing homelessness and prioritize funding to place housing in close proximity to transit, a grocery store, health facilities, recreation, employment centers, and quality schools.

Housing 8 - Provide a comprehensive range of services, public facilities, and economic development programs to enable people experiencing or who are on the verge of homelessness to access and remain in stable housing with pathways to self-sufficiency.

Housing 9 - Provide an efficient and effective system of services based on evidence, data, and best practices to equitably respond to the community's housing needs, reduce the number of foreclosures and evictions, and improve housing outcomes.

Wellness 11 - Develop and implement comprehensive emergency preparedness plans to provide all residents with access to essential needs, including food, water, sanitation, shelter, shade, cooling, and medical services during various types of emergencies.

Financial Considerations – There are multiple funding sources supporting the various programs outlined in this Memorandum, which include General Funds, State and Federal funding.

Legal Considerations – City Attorney's Office has reviewed this Memorandum.

Respectfully submitted,



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Assistant City Manager

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City Manager's Office