

**Albert G. and Sara I. Reuben Engagement Center**  
**Project Proposal for 1133 E. Washington Street, Frequently Asked Questions (4-20-2011)**

**Q: Where is the property and what is its current use?**

A. The address is 1133 East Washington Street. It is on the south side of Washington Street immediately east of and adjacent to Horizon House. For the last two years, Horizon House has used and continues to use the property to provide services to men and women experiencing homelessness.



**Q: Who owns the site?**

A. This site is currently owned by Horizon House, which partners with others including Health & Hospital Corporation and the Marion County Public Health Department to provide services. Health & Hospital Corporation will become the owner of the 1133 East Washington Street property and continue its close partnership with Horizon House.

**Q. What kind of neighbor will Health and Hospital Corporation be for the East Washington Street corridor and the surrounding neighborhoods?**

A. Since 1855, Wishard Health Services has addressed health and poverty issues in Indianapolis. In 1951, Indiana General Assembly enacted the statute creating the Health and Hospital Corporation of Marion County which oversees Wishard Health Services, the Marion County Public Health Department and Midtown Community Mental Health Center, which opened in 1969. For more than 60 years, Health and Hospital Corporation has been a community asset whose mission is to promote and protect the health of everyone in the community and to

provide health care to those who are underserved. Committed to promoting good health, Health and Hospital Corporation believes that every citizen of Marion County should receive medical treatment and other public health services in a quality and friendly environment, free from access barriers resulting from race, gender, age, sexual orientation or other cultural and social aspects. Health and Hospital Corporation owns and/or leases properties throughout Marion County. Health and Hospital Corporation is governed by a Board of Trustees of seven individuals, all prominent members of the community and all appointed by the Mayor, the City-County Council, or the Board of County Commissioners. Health and Hospital Corporation employs more than 5,000 individuals, many of whom live within the communities where they work. Those employees make giving back to the community a way of life both in their jobs and in service. Organizational and individual volunteer initiatives extend to such efforts as community health fairs, neighborhood clean-up and rehabilitation projects in blighted areas, and employees giving of their time and personal resources to support relief efforts, blood drives, and countless community nonprofit organizations. Health and Hospital Corporation would be an active and accountable neighbor, as it has repeatedly demonstrated in neighborhoods throughout our community.

**Q. What are the current approved uses for this property?**

A. The property is currently zoned C-5 General Commercial District and approved for medium to heavy commercial uses.

**Q. What change are the owners of the property seeking?**

A. Horizon House and Health & Hospital Corporation would be requesting a change in zoning to an SU-9 Special Use District which allows for buildings and grounds to be used by any department of town, city, township, county, state or federal government.

**Q. Why would this change be requested?**

A. Horizon House provides day services to individuals experiencing homelessness. Those services are provided by co-located partners including IU Medical Group, Midtown Mental Health, Indiana Legal Services, the Veteran's Administration, and others. These partners along with other community homeless service providers and outreach teams can increase successful outcomes and provide more cost-effective and sustainable interventions with a short-term intensive care facility for those individuals who are homeless and chronically intoxicated. Located next to Horizon House, this facility would complement existing community

interventions and the adjacent day-services provided at Horizon House. The model for this approach is called an Engagement Center.

**Q. What was the process to determine whether, how and where to establish the Engagement Center?**

A. Through a grant provided by the Lilly Endowment, in 2008 the Coalition for Homelessness Intervention and Prevention and the United Way of Central Indiana supported an evaluation and study to determine whether and how an Engagement Center could be developed in Indianapolis, and where such a facility might feasibly be located. CHIP contracted with Cripe Architects & Engineers to develop plans for locating the facility and for securing operations support and capital development. Cripe in turn contracted with Thomas A. King Consulting. These contractors met with 36 community and civic and philanthropic leaders, reviewed operational plans for similar centers in other cities, developed criteria for locating a center in Indianapolis, developed a strategic plan for securing operations support and funding for capital development, and identified a general area of the city that would maximize successful outcomes. A geographical area was identified based on proximity to the population that would be served, proximity to co-located medical and other services that would support the center, zoning considerations, and proximity to transportation and social service agency outreach resources.

In June, 2010, following further study and collaboration among a committee of more than 40 community and civic leaders and service providers representing the City of Indianapolis and 25 agencies and organizations from the public, non-profit and private sectors, the Coalition for Homelessness Intervention and Prevention applied for a grant from the Marion County Low Income Housing Trust Fund to engage in further predevelopment work for this project. Cripe Architects and Engineers was the principal contractor for the project, and Cripe utilized Cassidy Turley for real estate services and consulting, and Shrewsberry & Associates for environmental compliance consulting. Together these contractors researched and evaluated available parcels in the previously identified geographic area, and recommended that the facility be located at the 1133 E. Washington site based on the costs associated with renovation and new construction at that site, its proximity to the co-located services at Horizon House, its current use as a center to serve individuals experiencing homelessness and because the existing structure on that property could be put into immediate use.

**Q. What is an Engagement Center?**

A. An Engagement Center is a facility designed to accept individuals who are homeless and under the influence of alcohol or drugs or due to a chronic addiction or mental illness. Professional staff including nursing staff and social workers will assess the individuals, provide

them with a safe place to sleep, and engage them to enter permanent supportive housing, treatment and long-term rehabilitation with providers located throughout the city.

**Q. Will people be allowed to leave the Engagement Center while they are intoxicated?**

A. No. Clients will be assessed and if medically stable, they will be allowed to remain for services. Clients will not be allowed to leave the facility unless they are no longer intoxicated. If a client attempts to leave the facility while still intoxicated, the police will be called.

**Q. Will there be security?**

A. Yes. Security will be present at all times. Security staff will be Health and Hospital Corporation security officers. Security needs will be assessed on an ongoing basis as operations are evaluated and capacity increases.

**Q. What if a client comes to the Engagement Center and is not medically stable? Will they be turned away?**

A. No. If a client is not medically stable or becomes unstable while at the Engagement Center, they will be taken to the hospital for appropriate care and treatment.

**Q. How long will people be allowed to stay at the facility?**

A. Clients who indicate a willingness to work with a social service provider and enter permanent supportive housing, a treatment program or other services will be allowed to stay at the center for up to 72 hours. If a client elects not to engage in services, they will be allowed to stay until they are no longer intoxicated.

**Q. Will clients staying at the center be allowed to loiter or hang out outside the facility or on or about the property of neighboring property owners?**

A. No. Clients who indicate a willingness to enter into housing and treatment services may stay at the center for up to 72 hours, but during that time they will be required to remain inside the center or to engage with partner social service agencies to address issues and work toward long-term sobriety and stability. Clients engaging in services will generally do so at the third-

party provider locations. Continuing Clients will not be allowed to loiter on the property or nearby properties, and must be actively engaged in services when they are away from the center.

**Q. Will people staying at the center be allowed to smoke in or outside the building?**

A. No. The center will be owned by Health and Hospital Corporation and operated by Midtown Community Mental Health Center. All HHC facilities have a strict “no smoking” policy.

**Q. How many people are allowed to stay in the Engagement Center at the same time?**

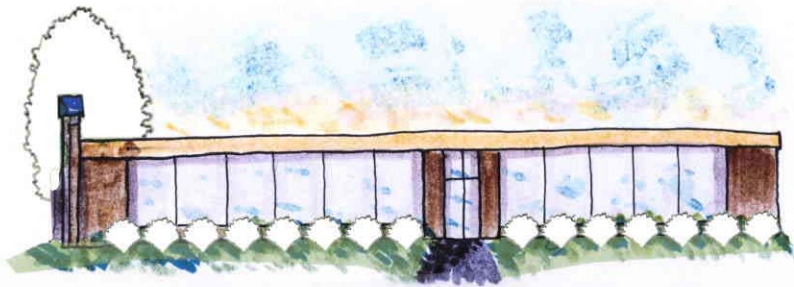
A. The center would be developed in two phases. The first phase, anticipated to open in 2011, would use the existing building at 1133 E. Washington Street, immediately adjacent to Horizon House, and would have capacity for 12 clients. The second phase, new construction at that site tying into the existing structure, would be developed at the end of 2011 or in 2012, and would add capacity to accommodate a total of 50 clients. Clients will be allowed to stay at the center for up to 72 hours if they elect to engage in services when leaving the center, including treatment and long-term housing with other partner agencies.

**Q. What will the Engagement Center look like when the new building is finished?**

A. It will be a single story brick building similar to the look and feel of the Horizon House. The building will occupy most of the lot from east to west and will extend to the sidewalk on Washington Street. See the sample preliminary rendering below.

CHIP Engagement Center  
Site Building Location Analysis

Figure 4-2: Proposed Engagement Center



**Q. Where will the entrance to the building be located?**

A. As currently planned, the building will front Washington Street and the entry will be on Washington Street. There will be an intake area inside.

**Q. Will people be standing in line to get into the facility?**

A. No. There will be an intake area inside. There will not be any queuing outside of the building by people waiting to get inside. Moreover, it is anticipated that all or nearly all clients will be brought to the Engagement Center by a professional outreach team, a service provider, or the IMPD.

**Q. What are the hours of operation?**

A. The Engagement Center will operate in three shifts, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Staff will be present at all times.

**Q. Will there be parking?**

A. Yes. There will be limited parking for staff and partner agencies.

**Q. How will clients be brought to the Engagement Center?**

A. Clients can come in a variety of ways. Nearly all clients entering the center will be engaged on the street, outside businesses and in the neighborhoods by social service providers and street outreach teams. Those teams will transport clients to the center. Transportation may also occur through IMPD. Clients may also be brought in by a private individual, a business owner or others. Clients may also self-report.

**Q. Will you consider input on how facility looks and operates in ways that mitigate any negative impacts on the neighboring community?**

A. Yes. While we have a plan for operations and the facility, we are flexible on signage, lighting, streetscape and other design features. We will consider any suggestions subject to

available funding to support the suggestions and if the suggestions do not negatively impact the treatment model.

**Q. Do we really need another shelter for the homeless?**

A. This is not a homeless shelter, but rather a short-term facility where individuals who are homeless *and intoxicated* have an access point to get into housing and treatment. Currently, there is no facility or shelter operating in Indianapolis that will take in and provide services individuals while they are intoxicated, and as a result these individuals remain on the street in front of businesses or in neighborhoods, or are taken to jail or to Wishard Hospital at a substantial cost to taxpayers.

**Q. Why do we need an Engagement Center?**

A. There are no facilities in Indianapolis that provide shelter to individuals while they are under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Currently, individuals who are homeless and under the influence of alcohol or drugs are seeking refuge on our streets and outside our businesses and residences, under bridges and in outdoor encampments. As a result, they have frequent encounters with our police and public safety system, are incarcerated, or surge our local hospital emergency rooms. None of these circumstances offer a response to their homelessness or effective access to treatment for the mental health and substance use-related challenges that cause or sustain their homelessness. In addition, police and emergency room encounters are costly in time and money. Indianapolis currently spends between three and 11 million dollars a year in public safety and public health costs in intervening with these individuals.

An Engagement Center will provide a less costly way to intervene with individuals who are homeless and intoxicated, and will provide a sustainable and effective means to engage them in services, housing and successful outcomes. Currently, engagement with this population is done on the street with social service outreach teams. Over the last year, a coalition of street outreach teams supported by a modest grant targeted 21 individuals for intensive interventions. Those individuals were responsible for more than 1,200 arrests for public intoxication prior to engagement, and fewer than 100 post-engagement. As a result of these street interventions, several of these individuals have been sober and housed for as long as a year after having spent more than 10 years on the street. Over the course of a year in Indianapolis, as many as 500 individuals will need the services of this intensive outreach. An Engagement Center will add capacity and provide long-term sustainability to this effort and increase successful outcomes in the community.

An Engagement Center will provide temporary refuge for people who are intoxicated and experiencing homelessness but who may not be admitted to other shelters due to their intoxication. At the same time, police and medical resources now being surged by this population can be redirected to other priorities. Both the Blueprint to End Homelessness and the 2007 Report and Recommendations from the Community Crime Prevention Task Force, call for the development of an Engagement Center.

**Q. Is the Engagement Center model successful?**

A. Yes. The Indianapolis Engagement Center is being modeled after an Engagement Center Facility in Columbus, Ohio. That facility, Maryhaven, has reported outcomes indicating that half of the individuals entering the facility, including individuals who have been chronically homeless and chronically intoxicated, leave the facility to enter housing, treatment and other long-term recovery situations.

**Q. How would an Engagement Center operate?**

A. If the current proposal is developed, the Engagement Center would open in two phases. The Phase 1 facility will have capacity for 12 clients. The phase 2 facility will have capacity for 50 clients. When operating at full capacity, the Engagement Center would be an open dorm format, approximately 10,000 square feet, with 50 beds (divided for male and female), showers, offices for administrative and medical personnel, and room for social engagement. The beds would be set up in such a manner as to ensure privacy, and the men and women would be separated. Approximately 30 beds would be set aside for men, 10 for women, and 10 beds would be flexible based on the nightly census. The facility would have an open floor plan with separate shower and bathroom facilities for men and women.

The Engagement Center would partner with law enforcement, hospitals and health centers, mental health centers, and housing providers to serve its target population. Rather than being left on the street or entering our criminal justice system and public health care system, these individuals would be brought to the Engagement Center where professionally trained staff will do a minimal medical assessment (e.g., blood pressure, temperature, withdrawal symptoms, etc). If a person requires immediate medical, mental health or medical detoxification for safe withdrawal, they will be referred and transported to the hospital for appropriate care. The Engagement Center would not offer medical detoxification, but would have a partnership with a service provider or providers for that purpose.

An individual may be referred to the Engagement Center by staff outreach, community street outreach, social service providers, law enforcement and medical personnel, mental health providers and the like. The Engagement Center would have minimal requirements for admission for safety and security of staff and residents without creating barriers to shelter and services. Individuals will be screened for weapons or contraband and will not be allowed to use alcohol or drugs while at the facility. Individuals will not be allowed to leave the facility until they are sober. The Engagement Center would provide individuals with a place to sleep off their intoxication followed by an opportunity to meet with professional staff and engage in resource referral, including supportive housing and treatment. The Engagement Center staff would be affiliated with or would work closely with social services, medical and housing providers to enhance successful transition for the individual to housing, treatment and rehabilitation.

**Q. How will the Engagement Center be staffed?**

**A.** The Engagement Center will be operated by Midtown Community Mental Health Center, a division of Wishard Health Services and the Health and Hospital Corporation of Marion County. Staff will consist of an administrator, nursing staff, and social workers to engage clients and provide case management to get them into housing and treatment. There will also be security on site. In its first phase, with capacity to serve 12 clients, the Engagement Center will have 12 staff members working three shifts at four individuals per shift. In the second phase of operations, with capacity to serve 50 clients, the Engagement Center will have 21 staff members working three shifts at seven individuals per shift. The Engagement Center will have working agreements with social services and housing and treatment providers throughout the city.

**Q. Who is supporting the creation of an Engagement Center in Indianapolis?**

**A.** This project directly addresses a specific goal of the 2002 Blueprint to End Homelessness. That strategic plan was created by the bipartisan Indianapolis Housing Task Force. More than 450 individuals and 150 community organizations contributed to this plan. The Blueprint and the specific goal of establishing an Engagement Center was endorsed by two different city administrations including the current city administration. The goal of establishing an Engagement Center was also endorsed in the 2007 Report and Recommendations from the Community Crime Prevention Task Force. This project also enjoys strong partnerships with social service providers and outreach agencies providing services to people experiencing homelessness, as well as emergency shelters, housing providers and developers, treatment facilities, public health and emergency medical facilities, and the city's public safety department.

In 2008, CHIP convened an “Engagement Center Task Force” made up of community stakeholders from multiple entities. These individuals have gathered from time to time to inform next steps and strategies to drive the establishment of an Engagement Center, and individuals among this task force have contributed to specific activities as part of and following those meetings. This group includes representatives from CHIP, the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department, the Homeless Initiative Program, the Salvation Army, Fairbanks Alcohol and Drug Treatment Center, Gallahue Mental Health Services, Wheeler Mission Ministries, Horizon House, Partners in Housing Development Corporation, Drug Free Marion County, Wishard Health Services, Midtown Mental Health, Pathway to Recovery, the Free Methodist Church, United Way of Central Indiana, Volunteers of America, Adult and Child, the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, LISC of Indiana, the Indy Dream Center, the Central Indiana Community Foundation, and the City of Indianapolis.

In addition to the United Way of Central Indiana, many of the organizations represented above have prepared support letters endorsing the Engagement Center initiative and the 1133 East Washington project currently being proposed. Additional support letters have been prepared by the HVAF of Indiana (f/k/a the Homeless Veterans Assistance Foundation of Indiana), Greater Indianapolis Progress Committee (GIPC), Marion County Prosecutor Terry Curry, Anthem Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Indiana, the Marion County Public Health Department, the Realtor Foundation of the Metropolitan Indianapolis Board of Realtors, Marion County Sheriff John Layton, the American Civil Liberties Union of Indiana, Marion County Superior Courts and the Marion County Probation Department, the Dove Recovery House, the Richard L. Roudebush Veterans Affairs Medical Center, and the Progress House, among many others.

Additional letters supporting the initiative and the proposed project are invited.

**Q. Who should I contact if I have other questions about the Engagement Center or the planning for developing the center in Indianapolis?**

A. Please contact Tim Joyce (tjoyce@chipindy.org) or Michael Hurst (mhurst@chipindy.org) with the Coalition for Homelessness Intervention and Prevention if you have questions or would like further information about the project. You may also reach us by telephone at 317.630.0853.