



**WORK SESSION MEETING
OF THE
CITY COUNCIL
City of Maplewood, Missouri**

City Council Chambers, City Hall
7601 Manchester Road, Maplewood, MO 63143

**Tuesday, October 14, 2025
6:00 PM**

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. City Hall Bond Referendum Update
4. Human Services Commission Proposal for Emergency Winter Shelter Program
5. Adjournment

Accessibility Notice

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Posted on October 10, 2025, at Maplewood City Hall and maplewoodmo.gov

Memorandum



To: Mayor and City Council
From: Amber Withycombe, City Manager
Date: October 9, 2025
Re: **Bond Referendum Project Update**

Staff continues to advance preparations for the April 2026 bond referendum to fund City Hall and police facility expansion and renovation, ADA accessibility improvements, infrastructure modernization, and Public Works garage capital improvements. This memo provides an update on bond sizing analysis, communications planning, and facility design progress.

Bond Sizing Recommendation

At staff's request, UMB Bank prepared preliminary financial analyses for two bond issuance scenarios: \$10.6 million and \$11 million in par amounts. After reviewing both scenarios and their fiscal impacts, staff recommends proceeding with the \$10.6 million bond issuance to minimize the tax levy increase while funding critical facility improvements.

The City's current debt service levy is \$0.28 per \$100 of assessed value. Original bond projections presented last spring anticipated a \$10 million project with a debt service levy of \$0.50. With more refined project pricing and finalized data from St. Louis County to establish 2025 tax rates, these projections have been adjusted. Based on the City's finalized 2025 net assessed valuation of \$282,553,796 (total assessed valuation of \$289,371,166 minus TIF assessed value of \$6,817,370), UMB has calculated that a debt service levy of \$0.53 per \$100 of assessed value will be required to service the recommended \$10.6 million bond issuance alongside existing debt obligations over the 20-year bond term. The assessed valuation decreased from earlier projections due to 2025 being a reassessment year and contested property tax appeals resolved through the Board of Equalization process.

It is important to note that these projections assume assessed valuation remains flat at \$282,553,796 throughout the 20-year bond term. This conservative approach provides a prudent worst-case scenario for debt service planning and ensures the City can meet its obligations even in slower growth scenarios. However, historical trends and regional data suggest that assessed valuation is unlikely to remain static over two decades. Any growth in assessed valuation would proportionally reduce the per-property tax burden, as the fixed debt service levy would be distributed across a larger tax base. Based on anticipated collections for the 2026 tax year of \$808,392 with a 97.63% collection rate, the City expects actual collections of approximately \$789,233, which supports the sustainability of this debt structure.

Premium bonds are anticipated to generate approximately \$11.3 million in available project funds. Premium bonds are municipal bonds sold above their par (face) value because they carry interest rates higher than current market rates. In this scenario, while the par amount is \$10.6

million, the premium generated provides an additional \$700,000 in project funding. This means the City receives \$11.3 million upfront for capital improvements while only repaying the \$10.6 million par value plus interest over the 20-year bond term, effectively reducing net borrowing costs.

For a home valued at \$300,000 (assessed value of \$57,000), the debt service levy increase from \$0.28 to \$0.53 represents a monthly increase of approximately \$11.86, or \$142.32 annually. This calculation assumes no growth in assessed valuation; if the City's tax base grows as anticipated, the actual per-property impact would be lower over the life of the bonds.

Does Council support proceeding with the \$10.6 million bond issuance requiring a debt service levy of \$0.53, or would Council prefer to explore a smaller bond amount to reduce the tax levy increase? Are there concerns about the increased levy from the originally projected \$0.50 to \$0.53 that we should address in our communications to voters? The City has not yet issued any public communications regarding the previous proposed levy increase outside of Council meeting materials.

Communications Planning

On October 6, staff met with Novella, the bond communications consulting firm, to begin developing the voter education campaign. Novella is finalizing core messaging and a comprehensive communications plan scheduled for completion in early November. Initial messaging development emphasizes that this bond represents a critical investment in public safety infrastructure, municipal operations, and City services that will serve the community for decades. Key themes include improving public safety and community well-being by addressing the 60-year-old facility's deficiencies, funding these projects in a fiscally responsible and transparent manner with costs equivalent to approximately one cup of coffee per week for most homeowners, and addressing multiple community priorities including public safety needs, accessibility improvements, infrastructure modernization, and enhanced operational efficiency.

Would Council like to review and discuss the core messaging themes and the bond communications plan at a November 11 work session meeting? Would Council like to participate in specific voter education activities or community presentations as part of the campaign? Are there particular community groups or stakeholders Council believes should receive targeted outreach during the education campaign?

Facility Design Progress

Navigate continues refining space allocation plans for the City Hall and police facility renovations. Recent coordination meetings have focused on finalizing departmental adjacencies based on operational needs identified by police department leadership and city staff. Navigate has commissioned a consultant to develop visual materials for the referendum campaign, including two perspective exterior renderings and two colored floor plans based on preliminary conceptual designs. Staff is also working with Navigate to identify capital improvement projects for the Public Works garage that can be accommodated within the proposed bond project scope and budget, particularly given the anticipated yield from the premium bonds.

Should staff prioritize specific Public Works garage improvements to include in the bond project, or does Council prefer to see all viable options before making recommendations? Given the available project funds of approximately \$11.3 million after accounting for issuance costs, are there adjustments to the current project scope Council would like staff to consider?

Next Steps

An ordinance calling for a bond election in Maplewood will be prepared for Council's November 11 meeting, with final reading planned for the December 9 meeting. For the April 7, 2026, municipal election in St. Louis County, the final certification date for the ballot is January 27, 2026. This is the deadline for local jurisdictions to submit their certified ballot language and other information to the Board of Election Commissioners. The City's April ballot will also include one Council seat each in Wards 1, 2, and 3.

Over the coming weeks, staff will finalize the communications plan and timeline with Novella, complete space allocation refinements with Navigate, identify specific Public Works garage improvement projects and their related costs, and continue coordinating with UMB Bank on bond issuance timing and structuring. A comprehensive voter education campaign will launch in early 2026 to ensure residents have information about this critical infrastructure investment before the April election. Staff is planning a town hall kick-off education event for Wednesday, January 14, 2026.

Attached

Update bond analysis from UMB with 2025 net assessed valuation

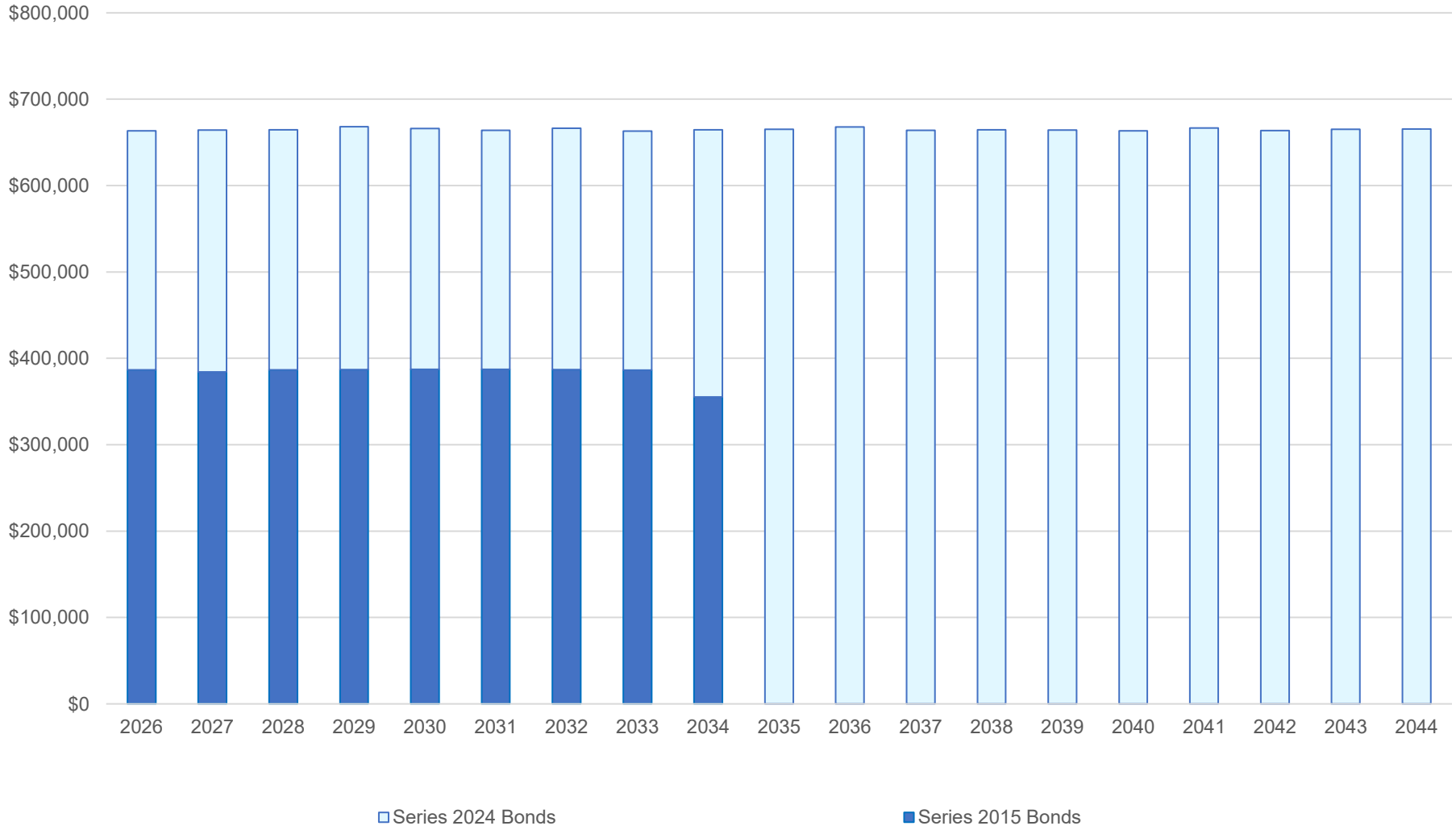
Preliminary project costs and timeline from Navigate

Expansion/renovation working draft layout and renderings from Navigate

City of Maplewood – Outstanding General Obligation Bonds



Annual Debt Service Paid from Debt Service Levy of \$0.28



City's General Obligation Debt Margin



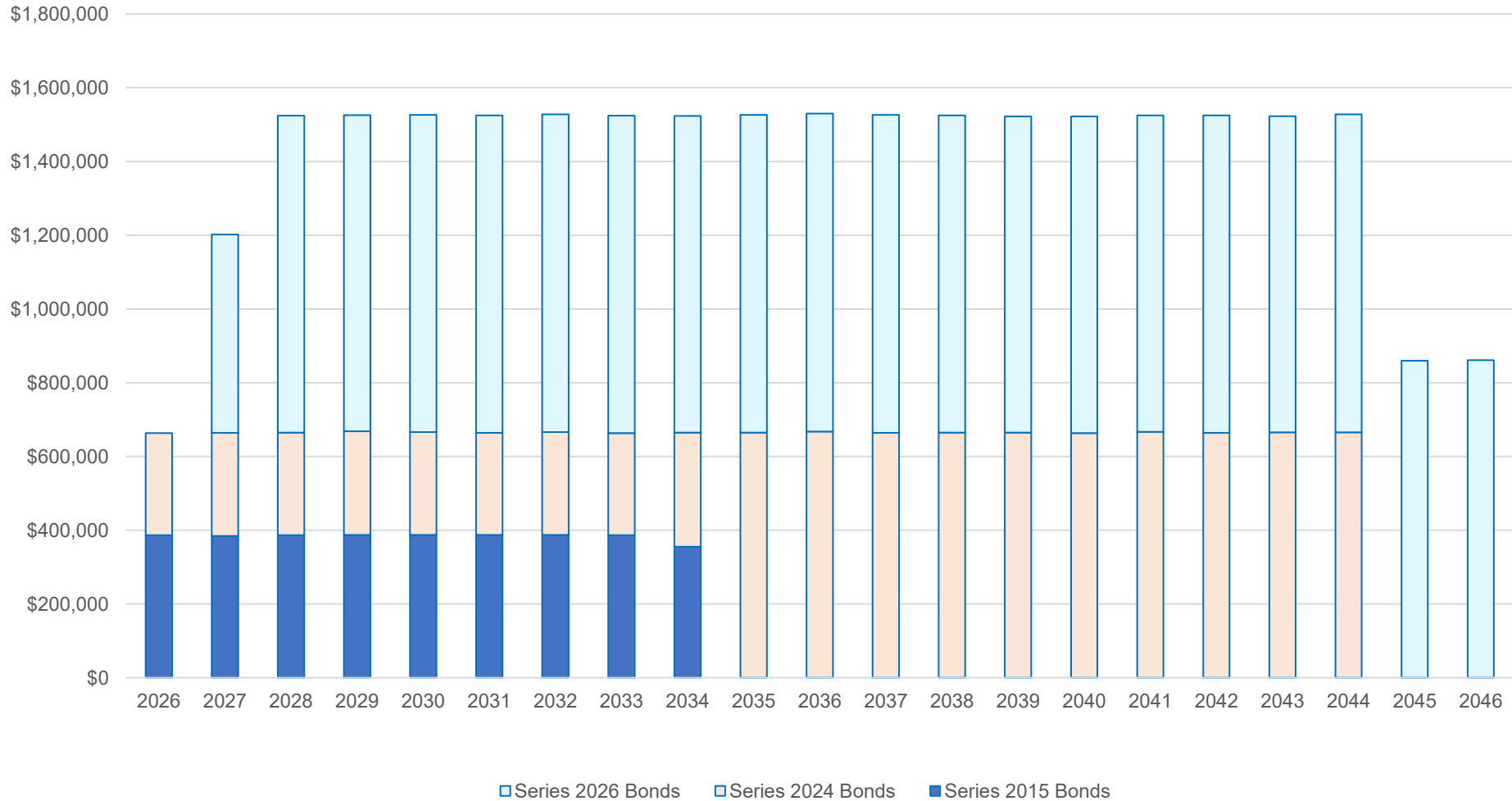
2025 Assessed Valuation (Preliminary)	\$282,553,796
Debt Limit (20%* of Assessed Valuation)	56,510,759
Less: General Obligation Bonds Outstanding	(8,480,000)
Legal Debt Margin	<u>\$48,030,759</u>

* 10% for General Purposes and 10% additional for Streets/Sewers

New Money Financing – \$10,600,000 General Obligation Bonds



Estimated Annual Debt Service to be Paid from Debt Service Levy of \$0.53



Estimated Annual Debt Service with Additional \$10.6MM Series 2026 GO Bonds



Tax Year	Debt Year	Assessed Valuation	Tax Rate	Estimated Tax Collection	Collection Rate	Estimated Tax Revenues	Series 2015			Plus: Series 2024			Plus: Series 2026 Bonds			Estimated Aggregate Debt Service			DSF Balance	% of DS
							Principal	Interest	Debt Service	Principal	Interest	Debt Service	Principal	Interest	Debt Service	Principal	Interest	Debt Service		
2024	2025	\$253,087,270	\$0.28	\$708,644	97.63%	\$691,849	290,000	\$93,200	\$383,200	175,000	108,572	283,572				465,000	\$201,772	\$666,772	\$593,058	89%
2025	2026	282,553,796	0.28	791,151	97.63%	770,038	300,000	86,675	386,675	35,000	241,800	276,800				335,000	328,475	663,475	699,621	105%
2026	2027	282,553,796	0.54	1,525,790	97.63%	1,489,629	305,000	79,175	384,175	40,000	240,050	280,050	\$205,000	\$332,722	\$537,722	550,000	651,947	1,201,947	987,303	82%
2027	2028	282,553,796	0.54	1,525,790	97.63%	1,489,629	315,000	71,550	386,550	40,000	238,050	278,050	340,000	519,750	859,750	695,000	829,350	1,524,350	952,582	62%
2028	2029	282,553,796	0.54	1,525,790	97.63%	1,489,629	325,000	62,100	387,100	45,000	236,050	281,050	355,000	502,750	857,750	725,000	800,900	1,525,900	916,311	60%
2029	2030	282,553,796	0.54	1,525,790	97.63%	1,489,629	335,000	52,350	387,350	45,000	233,800	278,800	375,000	485,000	860,000	755,000	771,150	1,526,150	879,791	58%
2030	2031	282,553,796	0.54	1,525,790	97.63%	1,489,629	345,000	42,300	387,300	45,000	231,550	276,550	395,000	466,250	861,250	785,000	740,100	1,525,100	844,320	55%
2031	2032	282,553,796	0.54	1,525,790	97.63%	1,489,629	355,000	31,950	386,950	50,000	229,300	279,300	415,000	446,500	861,500	820,000	707,750	1,527,750	806,199	53%
2032	2033	282,553,796	0.54	1,525,790	97.63%	1,489,629	365,000	21,300	386,300	50,000	226,800	276,800	435,000	425,750	860,750	850,000	673,850	1,523,850	771,979	51%
2033	2034	282,553,796	0.54	1,525,790	97.63%	1,489,629	345,000	10,350	355,350	85,000	224,300	309,300	455,000	404,000	859,000	885,000	638,650	1,523,650	737,958	48%
2034	2035	282,553,796	0.54	1,525,790	97.63%	1,489,629				445,000	220,050	665,050	480,000	381,250	861,250	925,000	601,300	1,526,300	701,287	46%
2035	2036	282,553,796	0.54	1,525,790	97.63%	1,489,629				470,000	197,800	667,800	505,000	357,250	862,250	975,000	555,050	1,530,050	660,866	43%
2036	2037	282,553,796	0.54	1,525,790	97.63%	1,489,629				485,000	179,000	664,000	530,000	332,000	862,000	1,015,000	511,000	1,526,000	624,496	41%
2037	2038	282,553,796	0.54	1,525,790	97.63%	1,489,629				505,000	159,600	664,600	555,000	305,500	860,500	1,060,000	465,100	1,525,100	589,025	39%
2038	2039	282,553,796	0.54	1,525,790	97.63%	1,489,629				525,000	139,400	664,400	580,000	277,750	857,750	1,105,000	417,150	1,522,150	556,504	37%
2039	2040	282,553,796	0.54	1,525,790	97.63%	1,489,629				545,000	118,400	663,400	610,000	248,750	858,750	1,155,000	367,150	1,522,150	523,983	34%
2040	2041	282,553,796	0.54	1,525,790	97.63%	1,489,629				570,000	96,600	666,600	640,000	218,250	858,250	1,210,000	314,850	1,524,850	488,763	32%
2041	2042	282,553,796	0.54	1,525,790	97.63%	1,489,629				590,000	73,800	663,800	675,000	186,250	861,250	1,265,000	260,050	1,525,050	453,342	30%
2042	2043	282,553,796	0.54	1,525,790	97.63%	1,489,629				615,000	50,200	665,200	705,000	152,500	857,500	1,320,000	202,700	1,522,700	420,271	28%
2043	2044	282,553,796	0.54	1,525,790	97.63%	1,489,629				640,000	25,600	665,600	745,000	117,250	862,250	1,385,000	142,850	1,527,850	382,050	25%
2044	2045	282,553,796	0.54	1,525,790	97.63%	1,489,629							780,000	80,000	860,000	780,000	80,000	860,000	1,011,680	118%
2045	2046	282,553,796	0.54	1,525,790	97.63%	1,489,629							820,000	41,000	861,000	820,000	41,000	861,000	1,640,309	191%
							\$3,280,000	\$600,400	\$3,880,400	\$6,000,000	\$3,470,722	\$9,470,722	\$10,600,000	\$6,280,472	\$16,880,472	\$19,880,000	\$10,302,144	\$30,182,144		

Total Property Tax Levy



Rate per \$100 Assessed Value	2025 Tax Rate
City of Maplewood	
Residential Property	\$0.8150
Commercial Property	\$1.4180
Personal Property	\$1.6100
Debt Service	\$0.2800
Maplewood Special Business District	
Residential Property	\$0.0500
Commercial Property	\$0.2190
Personal Property	\$0.0000

Financial & Conceptual Schedule



Construction Estimate

Renovate Existing Facility

Description	Value	Remarks
Base scope plus storm shelter	\$ 4,659,200	
PD Training Room (1,200 sf lower level)	\$ 357,850	
PD Offices (1,200 sf upper level)	\$365,700	
Replace existing asphalt paving	\$ 134,800	
Covered parking for 20 cars	\$ 462,720	
Solar array on addition roof	\$ 330,000	
Exterior Stair	\$ 29,000	
Escalation *	\$ 570,540	9% assumes 2027Q2 bidding
Construction Contingency	\$ 690,990	10%
Owner's Program Budget	\$ 7,600,800	

* Tariff impact not quantified at this time.

Total Program Budget

Renovate Existing Facility

Description	Value	Remarks
Construction Contracts	\$ 7,600,800	Per prior slide.
Special Construction	\$ 21,000	Abatement and Permits.
Furniture, Fixtures, & Equipment	\$ 500,000	New furniture and equipment.
Professional Services	\$ 1,212,000	Design fees, project management.
Technology	\$ 259,000	Owner furnished technology.
Financing	\$ 175,000	Property acquisition excluded.
Miscellaneous Costs	\$ 334,500	Phasing costs, printing, advertising.
Owner Contingency	\$ 505,100	5% project contingency
Owner's Program Budget	\$ 10,607,400	

Conceptual Study

- Programming complete in April 2025.

Pre-Construction

- April 2026: Financing and Funding Determination
- May 2026: Design Kick Off
- A/E Selection: April-May 2026
- Schematic Design: June-August 2026
- Design Development: Sept-Nov 2026
- Construction Documents: December - March 2027
- Contractor Bidding: Spring 2027

Construction

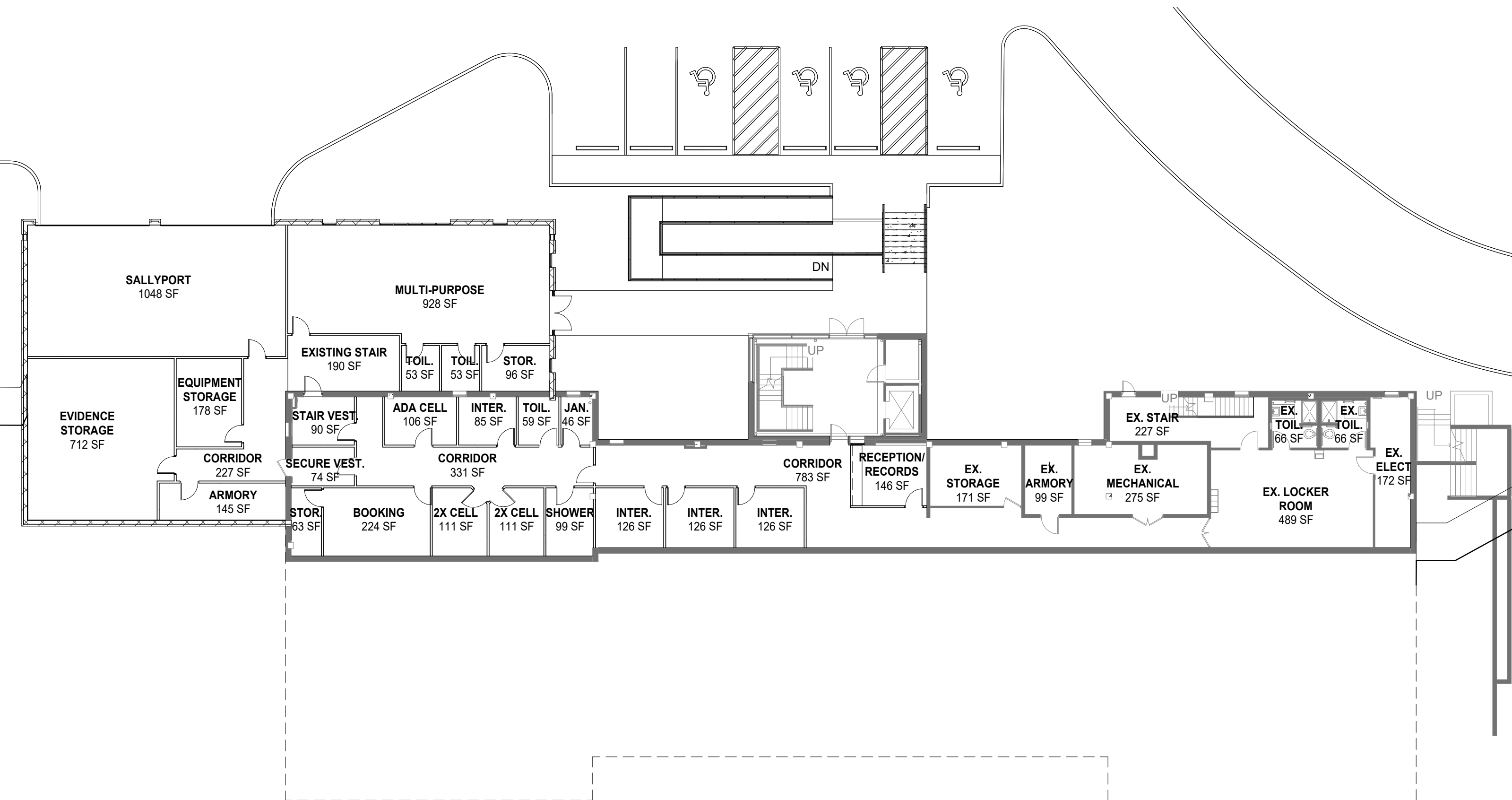
Phase 1 - Construct addition. Approx 10 months.

- Mobilize – 1 month.
- Sitework and foundations – 2 months.
- Structure – 2 months.
- Enclosure – 2 months.
- Interior fit out – 3 months.

Phase 2 - Renovate existing lower level and above grade site improvements. Approx 2 months.

Phase 3 - Renovate upper level. Approx 2 months.

Phase 4 - Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment. Approx 2 months.

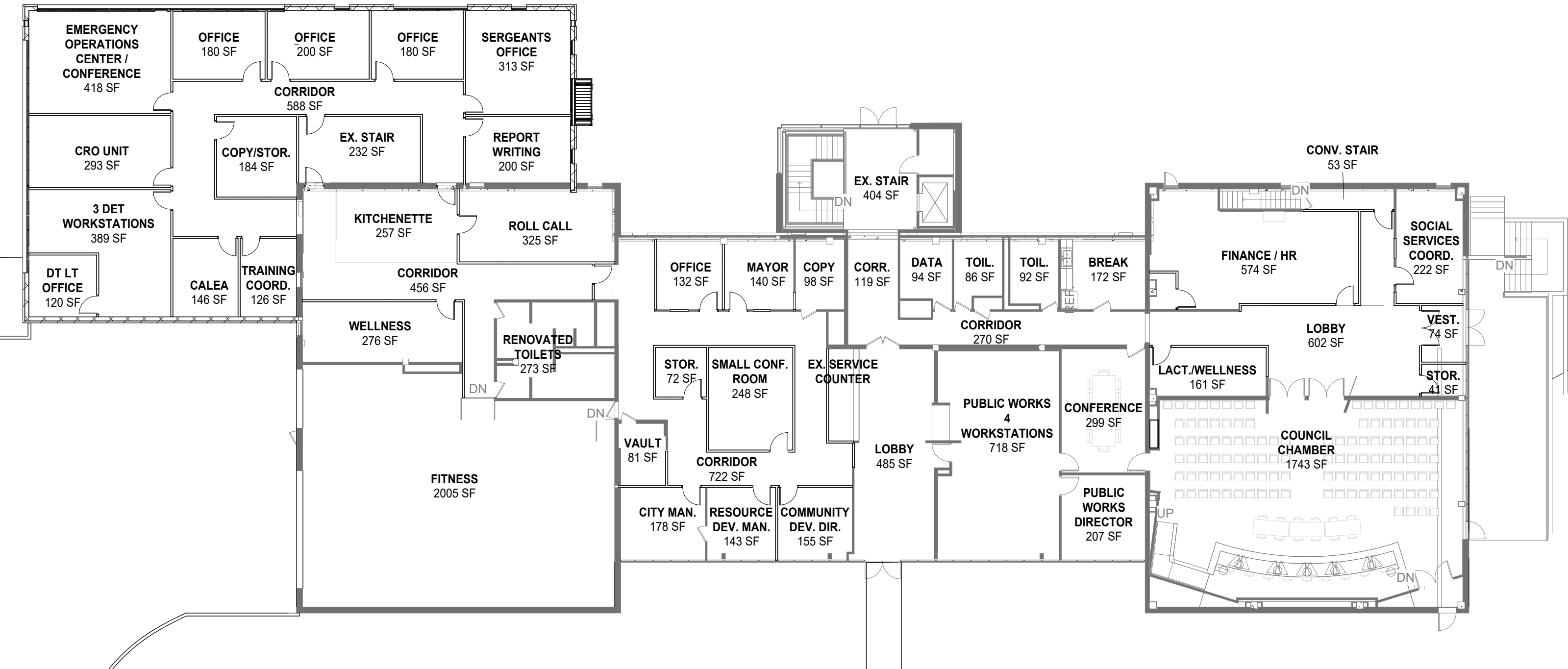


① Lower Level Floor Plan
 1/16" = 1'-0"

Maplewood City Hall / Police Department

Maplewood, Missouri

10.10.2025



① Main Level Floor Plan
1/16" = 1'-0"

Maplewood City Hall / Police Department



VIEW AT NORTHEAST CORNER



Maplewood City Hall / Police Department

Maplewood, Missouri

10.10.2025



VIEW AT NORTHWEST CORNER



Maplewood City Hall / Police Department

Maplewood, Missouri

10.10.2025

Proposal: Maplewood Emergency Winter Shelter Program

Submitted by: Maplewood Human Services Commission

A. Letter of Transmittal

Maplewood City Council members, Mayor Greenberg, and City Manager Amber Withycombe,

On behalf of the Maplewood Human Services Commission, I am honored to submit this proposal for the establishment of an Emergency Winter Shelter Program to serve our community during sub-freezing temperatures. This initiative responds to a pressing public safety need: ensuring that vulnerable residents — including those who are unhoused, experiencing power outages, or seeking temporary refuge — have access to warmth, safety, and support on life-threatening nights.

The purpose of this submission is not only to recommend the creation of an emergency winter shelter, but to formally request that the shelter infrastructure be incorporated into the April 2026 bond proposal now under development. As the City prepares to seek voter approval for a new, combined City Hall and Maplewood Police Department facility, this proposal asks that the design include a multi-purpose community space that can function as a safe daytime gathering area and transition into an emergency overnight shelter during extreme weather.

The proposal outlines the operational model, projected startup and operating costs, and liability structures under both City-operated and nonprofit-partner models. Importantly, it also identifies opportunities for the City to leverage federal resources, including Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, to offset expenses once the program is implemented in compliance with HUD standards.

We respectfully submit this proposal for your review and consideration, confident that it presents a responsible, compassionate, and fundable plan to safeguard the lives of Maplewood residents during the harshest nights of winter — and that including this shelter within the April 2026 bond proposal represents the most cost-effective and future-ready way to deliver this vital public safety infrastructure.

Respectfully submitted,
Bailey Schuchmann
Chair, Maplewood Human Services Commission

B. Table of Contents

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- F. Supporting Data
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- H. Space Recommendations
- I. Closing Statement
- J. References

C. Executive Summary

Homelessness is not a temporary problem for individuals or cities — it has always been part of our society and, until systematic infrastructure can properly address it as a public safety issue, it will remain so. The question is not whether Maplewood has unhoused residents, but whether the City will provide the same level of protection and dignity to these neighbors as it does to every other citizen.

It is neither ethical nor responsible to leave the safety of unhoused Maplewood residents solely in the hands of nonprofits located outside our borders. A comprehensive public safety infrastructure must include safeguards for those who are unhoused, without power, or seeking immediate refuge when temperatures fall to life-threatening levels.

At present, Maplewood has no dedicated safeguards for the estimated 10–12 unhoused residents who are predominantly veterans, individuals living with disabilities, or neighbors struggling with mental illness^{1 2}. These are not anonymous statistics; they are our consistent and regularly present unhoused neighbors — people whom the City already recognizes as vulnerable and deserving of protection in other contexts. Establishing a small-scale, weather-activated emergency shelter would extend that same commitment to safety and dignity.

The 2024 St. Louis County Homelessness Report revealed alarming upward trends:

- 71% of people experiencing homelessness are Black, despite making up less than one-quarter of the County population¹.
- Chronic homelessness increased 53% in a single year (2023–2024)¹.
- Veteran homelessness increased 44%, even as national veteran homelessness declined¹.
- 17% of people counted reported a serious mental health disorder¹.

Nationally, about 36.8% of unhoused adults live with a disability², and more than half of homeless veterans report disabilities or chronic health needs³. Together, these numbers confirm that homelessness disproportionately affects those already marginalized by race, disability, and service-connected trauma.

Regional shelters such as BHOC⁴ and Gateway180⁵ already operate near or above 95% utilization on winter nights. During sub-freezing events, “overflow” beds in the City

fill quickly, leaving few options for Maplewood residents. Transporting our unhoused neighbors into these crowded systems places strain on city-based shelters and removes beds that could otherwise serve City residents. Maplewood must shoulder its share of responsibility by providing localized, right-sized protections for those who call the streets, parks, and benches of Maplewood home.

Importantly, Maplewood's proposed program includes safeguards for referral and safety management. All persons experiencing homelessness would be pre-identified and vetted by the City Social Worker or Police Department, and shelter access would be granted by referral only. This ensures capacity is managed responsibly and participant safety is prioritized. By recognizing that any resident could one day face a housing crisis, this system affirms a citywide commitment to safety and dignity. Coupled with the trust established by the Police Department and the Social Services Coordinator, the program ensures Maplewood can protect all of its residents equitably.

Other municipalities have successfully integrated small-scale emergency shelter infrastructure into civic facilities. This proposal follows that model: a 10–12 bed, weather-activated shelter incorporated into the planned City Hall/Police Department facility. By aligning with HUD standards, Maplewood will not only create a humane and cost-effective safety net but also position itself to access federal ESG⁴⁹ and CDBG⁴⁸ funding.

By implementing this necessary safeguard — too often ignored by cities of the past — Maplewood will rise as a leader in equitable public safety protocols. Our hope is that others will follow this example.

D. Proposal & Program Model

Program Overview

The Maplewood Emergency Winter Shelter Program will be housed within the new City Hall/Police Department facility, contingent on voter approval of the 2026 bond initiative. By intentionally designing a larger community space that can transition into emergency sheltering, the City can provide a dual-purpose facility — serving residents by day, and offering safe, supervised shelter on nights when temperatures become dangerous. The program would activate during sub-freezing weather events (25°F with precipitation, 20°F without)²⁸. The shelter space will function as a lobby or community room that converts into an overnight refuge equipped with temporary bedding, access to warmth, safety, WiFi, snacks, and trained staff oversight. Access will be referral-only, with referrals obtained through the City Social Services Coordinator or either the Richmond Heights or Maplewood Police Departments.

Location & Design

- **Facility:** New City Hall/Police Department (pending April 2026 bond approval).
- **Capacity:** 10–12 beds.
- **Trigger Mechanism:** Sub-freezing temperatures (25°F with precipitation, 20°F without)²⁸.

Operations Plan

- **Staffing:** One trained staff member (social work background preferred) supported by volunteers, with potential partnership from Winter Outreach.
- **Security:** Maplewood Police keep an overnight patrol officer overnight, and can be on call for emergency scenarios. An additional officer on staff isn't required; only a modest stipend for on-call coordination/security.
- **Services:** Warmth, light snacks, bathrooms, monitoring, connection to county referral services.
- **Notification & Access:** Residents pre-identified and vetted by City Social Worker or Police. Referral-only to ensure safety and manage capacity.
- **Communications:** Direct outreach to vetted participants; no public mass announcements.

Liability Insurance Models

Option 1: City-Operated Model

- Coverage is provided through the St. Louis Area Insurance Trust (SLAIT), a member-funded, self-insured pool serving professionally managed cities in the St. Louis area²³.
- Maplewood's Annual Comprehensive Financial Report confirms the City participates in SLAIT for general and automobile liability (and workers' compensation)²².
- SLAIT is member-governed and uses pooled premiums/reserves; assessments or premium adjustments may be made based on exposure and loss experience (e.g., coverage limit changes, pool-wide loss trends)^{24 25}.
- Annual cost impact: Operating costs remain \$17,000–\$23,400 (≈40 nights). Any incremental SLAIT premium/assessment for adding the emergency-shelter exposure will be determined in consultation with SLAIT and the City's Finance Director/City Manager; no separate standalone policy is required^{24 25}.

Option 2: Nonprofit-Partner Model

Partner nonprofit carries \$1M/\$2M general liability, names City as Additional Insured, and executes a hold-harmless; City retains facilities coverage through SLAIT^{14 15 17}.

E. Cost Estimate & Funding Strategy

Assumptions used in these estimates: 10–12 beds; activation ≈ 40 nights/year; one on-site staff for 10 hours/night; referral-only access; temperatures at or below 25°F (with precipitation) / 20°F (without) as the trigger²⁸. Cost ranges reflect small-quantity municipal purchasing and recent regional benchmarks.

I. Startup Costs

(includes basic HUD compliance items; excludes major capital construction)

Item	Cost Estimate
Cots/mats (12 units @ ~\$250 each) ¹²	\$3,000
Linens/blankets (24 sets) ¹²	\$1,200

Lockable storage / cot cart ³⁷	\$750–1,000
Safety supplies (first aid, PPE, naloxone) ¹⁸	\$500–750
Furnishings (tables, intake desk, chairs) (municipal small-purchase estimate; internal benchmarking)	\$800–1,200
Fire safety & code compliance (alarms, extinguishers, signage) ²⁰	\$1,000–3,000
Accessibility (ADA ramp/grab bars) ¹⁶	\$1,000–2,500
Insurance & liability coverage (annualized startup) ¹⁷	\$1,500–3,000
Backup supplies (hygiene kits, diapers, basic consumables) ¹⁸	\$500–750

Total Startup: \$10,250 – \$16,400

II. Operating Costs (Per Night)

Context for scale and feasibility; Maplewood’s per-bed annual operating cost ≈ \$1,417–2,340 at 40 nights, based on \$17,000–\$23,400 ÷ 10–12 beds

Item	Cost Estimate
Staffing (1 worker, 10 hrs ~\$25/hr) ^{50 51}	\$250
Security coordination stipend (on-call officer/security) ^{52 53}	\$75–200
Food/snacks (10–12 guests ~\$5) ¹⁸	\$50–60
Utilities & supplies (cleaning/PPE replenishment) ¹⁹	\$50–75

Total per night: \$425–585

Annual operating cost (40 nights): \$17,000 – \$23,400

III. Liability Insurance Models

Option 1: City-Operated Model (via SLAIT)^{22 23 24 25}

- Covered under the St. Louis Area Insurance Trust (SLAIT), a member-funded public-entity pool providing liability and workers’ compensation coverage.
- Risk pool must be notified of new exposure; annual contributions may rise by \$2,500–5,000.
- **Annual total:** \$19,500 – \$28,400 (Operating \$17,000 - \$23,400 + risk-pool increase \$2,500 - \$5,000).
 - Comparable Missouri public-entity risk pools include MOPERM²⁶ and MIRMA²⁷.

Option 2: Nonprofit-Partner Model

- City partners with Winter Outreach and/or similar nonprofits.
- Nonprofit carries \$1M/\$2M general liability, names the City as Additional Insured, and signs a hold-harmless agreement^{14 15 17}. Operational liability resides with the nonprofit’s insurer.
- **Annual total:** \$16,500 – \$20,400

***Note: This range assumes the City may contribute \$1,500–3,000 toward partner insurance/startup in Year 1 (actual City cost may be lower if the partner absorbs all premiums).¹⁷*

IV. Security Arrangement

A dedicated officer is not required under this model, as Maplewood Police continue regular overnight patrols. We recommend designating the on-duty officer as on-call for shelter-related needs. The shelter's location within the Police Department building reinforces an atmosphere of safety and lawful security. Shelter funds will cover only a modest coordination stipend and minor security enhancements (estimated at \$75–200 per operational night), thereby avoiding duplication of costs already budgeted for police services.

V. Comparative Data Benchmarks

- **Biddle Housing Opportunities Center (BHOC):** \$515,000; 102 beds (≈\$5,050/bed annually) ⁴.
- **Gateway180:** \$617,000; 109 beds (≈\$5,660/bed annually) ⁵.
- **Covenant House Missouri:** \$147,855; 20 beds (≈\$7,392/bed annually) ⁶.
- **Peter & Paul – “Jugan” Shelter:** \$71,522; 100 beds (≈\$715/bed annually; donation-supplemented) ⁹.
- **St. Patrick Center – Women’s Night:** 20 beds; utilization consistently >100% ¹³.
- **Haven of Grace (Maternity):** 10–11 beds; utilization 70–127% ²⁹.

VI. Strategic Funding Note

Designing to HUD standards at the outset positions Maplewood to offset both startup and operating costs with outside funds:

- **ESG (Emergency Solutions Grants):** Eligible startup & operating; first \$100,000 exempt from local match⁴⁹.
- **CDBG (Community Development Block Grants):** Facility/ADA compliance & accessibility improvements⁴⁸.
- **CoC (Continuum of Care):** Wraparound services & case management once integrated³².

VII. Rationale for Maplewood’s Lower Costs

Size and Scope:

- The program is intentionally small-scale (10–12 beds) and limited to emergency-only activation on sub-freezing nights, rather than operating year-round.
- Unlike larger shelters with permanent staff and wraparound case management, Maplewood’s model focuses narrowly on basic overnight protection: warmth, safety, and referral to countywide resources.

Facility Integration:

- The shelter will be embedded within the new City Hall/Police Department facility rather than constructed as a stand-alone building.
- This integration avoids duplicating expenses for infrastructure, rent, major utilities, cleaning and maintenance, and security—services already covered within the overall operating budget of the municipal facility.

Reduced Staffing Model:

- Operations will rely on a single trained staff member per night, supported by volunteers, rather than multiple full-time shifts as is typical in larger shelters.
- The shelter's proximity to the Police Department offers the image of built-in safety oversight without requiring the expense of additional dedicated security personnel.

Community Support:

- Maplewood can leverage local partnerships with nonprofits, churches, and businesses for in-kind contributions of linens, food, cleaning supplies, and furnishings.
- These contributions reduce both startup and recurring operating costs compared to shelters that must fully purchase and maintain their inventories.

Targeted Services:

While regional facilities like Gateway180 and Covenant House provide meals, case management, workforce development, and housing navigation onsite, Maplewood's shelter will primarily provide temporary protection from extreme cold with referrals to external agencies for long-term services. This narrower mission keeps costs lean without compromising safety.

VIII. Conclusion

By limiting scope, integrating within an existing municipal building, and leveraging community partnerships, Maplewood's Emergency Winter Shelter can operate at a fraction of the cost of traditional facilities. This makes it fiscally responsible and uniquely tailored to the city's scale and needs, while still aligning with HUD compliance to qualify for future funding.

F. Supporting Data

I. Human Services Commission Role

The Maplewood Human Services Commission (HSC) is the City's official advisory body tasked with identifying unmet needs, recommending policy responses, and strengthening equitable access to services. Since 2021, the Commission has consistently identified housing instability and homelessness prevention as top priorities, documented through the 2021 City Survey, the 2024 Aging in Place survey, and ward-level community meetings.

II. Local Need

Maplewood has an estimated 10–12 unhoused residents, most of whom are veterans, disabled individuals, or neighbors experiencing mental illness. These individuals are consistently visible in public spaces throughout the City, yet Maplewood has no municipal safety net. At present, unhoused residents are dependent on nonprofit shelters located in St. Louis City. This reliance places strain on regional shelters and leaves Maplewood vulnerable when overflow capacity is exhausted.

III. Current Maplewood Protocol

Developed by City staff, outlined here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fSbnMY8aME-0Zy72e0YzHv3BnVi0r5M4/view?usp=drivesdk>⁴⁷.

IV. Community Feedback:

Community members have raised these concerns directly in public forums:

“Public Safety and Park Usage: Discussions on park safety, inclusivity, and addressing the needs of unhoused individuals.” — [Ward 3 Meeting Summary, Oct. 5, 2024]¹⁰

“Resources for Housing and Unhoused Community Members — With winter on the horizon, residents asked about available warming shelters for unhoused individuals. City and County libraries provide daytime warming centers, as does the Maplewood Salvation Army Community Center. All Maplewood police officers have crisis intervention training, and residents can request welfare checks if they have concerns about neighbors or friends. The city is working to make resources more accessible, and our new Social Services Coordinator will assist with these efforts.” — [Ward 2 Meeting Summary, Sept. 20, 2025]¹¹

These statements show that residents themselves identify the lack of overnight shelter as a pressing safety and equity issue. While Maplewood offers crisis intervention-trained police officers, welfare checks, and daytime warming centers through libraries and nonprofits, it lacks adequate, quality overnight protocol.

V. Regional Trends

According to the 2024 St. Louis County Homelessness Report (PIT/HIC, ICA):

- 71% of unhoused residents are Black, despite representing less than one-quarter of the county’s population¹.
- Chronic homelessness increased 53% between 2023–2024¹.
- Veteran homelessness increased 44%, even as national veteran homelessness declined¹.
- 17% of people reported living with a serious mental health disorder¹.
- Capacity Strain: Regional shelters, such as BHOC and Gateway180, consistently report 95%+ utilization on sub-freezing nights⁴.

VI. National Disparities

- Disability prevalence: 36.8% of unhoused adults nationally live with a disability².
- More than half of unhoused veterans live with disabilities or chronic health conditions³.
- In January 2024, 32,882 veterans were unhoused nationwide².

VII. Climate Data

- St. Louis region experiences ~40 nights below 25°F annually, with 20–25 nights below 20°F⁷.

- Local protocols (City of St. Louis Cold Weather Operations) already recognize the necessity of continuous winter sheltering — from December 1 to March 31, St. Louis shelters are asked to remain open nightly regardless of forecast — underscoring the gap in Maplewood’s preparedness²⁸.

VIII. Compliance Standards

- HUD Shelter Requirements (24 CFR §576.403(b)) mandate minimum safety, sanitation, and accessibility standards¹⁹.
- Missouri Minimum Shelter Standards (MHDC) outline fire safety, ADA, and health protocols²⁰.
- Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services Best Practices Guide for Warming Centers emphasizes municipal preparedness and formal activation criteria²¹.

G. Working Examples

I. St. Louis, MO (Own/Operation Partner)

Biddle Housing Opportunities Center (formerly Biddle House) is a facility owned by the City of St. Louis and operated by Peter & Paul Community Services (previously with St. Patrick Center) to serve as a Daytime Service Center and Overnight Emergency Shelter as part of a "Housing First" Coordinated Entry Collaboration between the City of St. Louis and the St. Louis City Continuum of Care (CoC). The city-owned building is located at 1211-19 N. Tucker Street.^{29 30 31}

II. Westminster, CO (Fund/Own/Operate)

The City of Westminster provides supplemental emergency sheltering in extreme cold weather conditions for residents who may be experiencing an emergency loss of heat or lack appropriate shelter. Westminster's emergency cold weather shelter program operates in extreme cold weather situations to augment the counties' services for residents who are not able to access them due to mobility challenges, availability, or other extenuating circumstances. The City encourages residents to familiarize themselves with sheltering programs available in Adams and Jefferson Counties. As part of the City's Continuum of Compassion, the Homeless Navigator program helps distribute hotel vouchers provided by JeffCo and Adams County for people experiencing homelessness. Westminster provides additional vouchers when the weather drops below 10°F to provide additional support for its most vulnerable population.^{32 33}

III. Spokane, WA (Funded/Operation Partner)

Spokane's approach to homelessness is characterized by a reliance on contracted shelters and outreach services funded by federal, state, and local sources, aiming to connect individuals with resources like the Shelter Me Spokane website. The city's approach is guided by a multi-year plan, such as the 2020–2025 strategic plan, which outlines goals for preventing and ending homelessness. Spokane receives significant funding for housing and services from a mix of federal, state, and local grants and dollars.^{34 35}

IV. Houston, TX (Owns/Funds +)

The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) has a coordinated system that includes using publicly owned buildings, such as schools and community centers, during weather emergencies. The City of Houston works with its partners, including Harris County, to open these facilities as temporary shelters or cooling centers as needed.

Houston's Continuum of Care (CoC), known as The Way Home, is funded through a combination of federal, state, local, and private sources. The Coalition for the Homeless (CFTH), known as The Way Home, is the lead agency responsible for coordinating and applying for this funding.

- HUD CoC Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO): The Way Home annually competes for millions of dollars through this grant program to fund homeless assistance projects. In 2024, the NOFO contributed approximately \$45 million to the Houston CoC.
- Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG): These grants, managed by the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA), provide funding for services and shelters and are allocated to CoCs across the state.
- COVID-19 relief funds: The CoC leveraged extra federal funding from pandemic-era programs, such as the American Rescue Plan (ARP), to expand its housing efforts. This included the Community COVID Housing Program (CCHP), which helped house thousands of individuals.
- Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV): This HUD-funded program provided vouchers to vulnerable households experiencing homelessness, with referrals coming from CoCs.
- Veteran Affairs (VA) funding: Service organizations like US VETS Houston receive a significant portion of their funding from the VA to provide housing & services for homeless veterans.
- Community Development Block Grants (CDBG): The City of Houston has used these federal funds for affordable housing projects and to address housing resiliency.

Coalition for the Homeless Houston – The Way Home Funding³⁶

V. Sonoma, CA (Owns/Funds)

The City of Sonoma recognizes that unsheltered individuals may need assistance to stay warm during an Extreme Cold Weather Event. To address this need, the City of Sonoma may supplement existing Sonoma County Winter Shelter operations by operating an Emergency Warming Center at The City's Emergency Homeless Shelter, formerly known as the Haven, as necessary.

The City's emergency homeless shelter is located at 151 First St. W, in the Sonoma Police Department parking lot, next to the Dog Park.

The City Council approved guidelines for opening an emergency warming center at their November 15, 2023, meeting for the 2023/2024 winter season. The approved policy and guidelines constitute a temporary plan, and the City will continue to collaborate with regional jurisdictions to formalize responses to the increased frequency of extreme weather events, adjusting the response plan accordingly.³⁷

H. Space Recommendations

I. Requirements & Recommendations Standards

1) ADA — Social Service Center Requirements

- “Group homes, halfway houses, shelters... shall comply with the 2010 standards applicable to residential facilities, including sections 233 and 809.”¹⁶
- Shelters must follow the 2010 ADA Standards (Title II/III) for residential facilities. For sleeping rooms with more than 25 beds, at least 5% of beds must have compliant clear floor space (per §806.2.3). “Compliant clear floor space” means leaving at least a 30” × 48” unobstructed rectangle beside certain beds so someone using a wheelchair can get to and use the bed.
- Even below 25 beds, you must maintain accessible routes and accessible entries/restrooms.¹⁶
- Related ADA layout (critical for routes to restrooms/lockers):
 - Accessible route width: “clear width... 36 inches (915 mm) minimum.”¹⁶
 - Turning space (if provided): “a space of 60 inches (1525 mm) diameter minimum.”¹⁶

2) FEMA / CDC Guidelines for Congregate Shelters

- “FEMA recommends that congregate shelters provide at least 110 square feet per person.” CDC designated congregate sheltering as “a last resort” during COVID-19.³⁸
- The 110 sq ft/person is a risk-mitigation planning level used during the pandemic. This standard is not feasible for our limited space and funds. Instead, we recommend alternative mitigations such as providing N95/KN95 masks and rapid test kits at intake, while meeting other required standards.

3) Restroom Requirements for Shelters

“One toilet for 20 persons... one shower for every 25 persons is recommended.”³⁹

4) HUD/ESG (24 CFR §576.403) Requirements

- ESG sets “minimum... safety, sanitation, and privacy standards.”¹⁹
- HUD *does not* set a fixed square-feet-per-bed number. Instead, shelters must provide an acceptable place to sleep with adequate space and security, meet sanitation, ventilation, thermal, illumination, and fire safety standards, and comply with state/local codes.¹⁹

II. Bedding — Types & Dimensions

- Standard Sleeping Mat (10–12 total): Dimensions: 24” W × 72” L × 5/8” thick.¹²
- Standard Cot (6–8 units): Luxury Tri-Fold Cot, size 78” × 29” × 12”.⁴⁰
- Accessible/FEMA–ADA Cot (4 units): “Size 80” × 30” × 18” high... 450 lbs.”⁴¹ “Size: 30” × 80” × 18” (without mattress).”⁴²

** (All products are standard in U.S. sheltering; either set of dimensions is acceptable for planning documents.)

III. Layout Proposal

- One open room (no permanent walls), with curtain or temporary dividers for modest privacy.
- Small staff/check-in desk inside the room.
- 10–12 sleeping positions total, with a mix of mats, standard cots, and accessible cots.
- Restrooms, lockers, drinking fountain in separate but accessible areas (ensure 36" clear accessible route door-to-door).¹⁶
- To avoid duplication, it would be ideal to share access with the Police Department facilities (restrooms/lockers) for both shelter recipients and staff.
- COVID-mitigation: since 110 sq ft/person is not feasible, provide N95/KN95 masks and rapid tests at intake.³⁸

IV. Minimum Space Recommendations

Assumptions: 6–8 standard mats + 4 accessible cots. Based on 40–60 sq ft/person baseline and ~100 sq ft/person for mobility users, plus ADA routes and staff desk.^{18 43 44}

Scenario 1 — 10 Beds (6 cots + 4 accessible cots)

- **Sleeping area:** $6 \times 40 = 240$ sq ft; $4 \times 100 = 400$ sq ft = **640 sq ft subtotal**
- Aisles & ADA routes (central aisle, sides, ends): **224 – 288 sq ft**
- Small desk + linen/gear nook: **+100 – 150 sq ft**
Total: ~964 – 1,078 sq ft
Clean request: ~1,100 sq ft for 10 beds

Scenario 2 — 12 Beds (8 cots + 4 accessible cots)

- Sleeping area: $8 \times 40 = 320$ sq ft; $4 \times 100 = 400$ sq ft = **720 sq ft subtotal**
- Aisles & ADA routes: **252 – 324 sq ft**
- Small desk + linen/gear nook: **100 – 150 sq ft**
Total: ~1,072 – 1,194 sq ft
Clean request: ~1,200 sq ft for 12 beds

V. Storage & Adjacencies

Cots (when folded):

- **Precise Kit:** folded size 9" × 31" × 41" (stackable).⁴⁵
- **Fire Station Outfitters:** wheeled cot cart footprint 33" × 43" (~10 sq ft).⁴⁶
- **Recommendation:** Plan **10–20 sq ft** for cot cart storage near the room entry (clear of egress routes).

Mats & linens:

- 8 mats stacked (5/8" each) are ~5" tall on a 2' × 6' shelf (~12 sq ft).¹²

- **Recommendation:** Reserve **12–20 sq ft** of shelving or a mobile rack for mats, blankets, and pillows.

Routes to bathrooms/lockers:

- Maintain a 36" minimum accessible route from the dorm room to restrooms/lockers. Confirm door clear widths and turning space at those rooms. ¹⁶

VI. The Proposal

We request ~1,100 sq ft (10 beds) to ~1,200 sq ft (12 beds).

Standards compliance: This overnight shelter will comply with ADA requirements for social service center establishments and HUD ESG minimum standards for safety, sanitation, and privacy. It uses nationally recognized mass-care planning factors (40–60 sq ft/person; ~100 sq ft/person for mobility users). ¹⁶
^{19 18 43 44}

Space request (baseline): To safely accommodate 10–12 individuals overnight in a single open room with curtain dividers, one small staff desk, and ADA-compliant routes—while using restrooms/lockers elsewhere—we request ~1,100 sq ft (10 beds) to ~1,200 sq ft (12 beds).

COVID-era guidance acknowledgement: FEMA’s 110 sq ft/person is a pandemic risk-mitigation benchmark we cannot meet; instead, we will mitigate risk with N95/KN95 masks and rapid test kits at intake. ³⁸

Restrooms/showers: Building-level capacity will follow mass-care ratios (1 toilet/20 persons; 1 shower/25 persons) and ADA routes to those facilities. ^{39 16}

Storage: Allocate 10–20 sq ft for cot carts and 12–20 sq ft for mats/linens, adjacent to the room and clear of egress paths. ^{46 12}

I. Closing Statement

This proposal is not just about shelter beds. It is about recognizing that public safety extends across socioeconomic lines, that dignity belongs to all residents, and that the City has a duty to safeguard every life in extreme conditions.

By embedding a small, weather-activated shelter into the new City Hall/Police Department, Maplewood can:

- Protect lives on the coldest nights.
- Address racial and disability disparities head-on.
- Reduce long-term taxpayer cost by leveraging ESG⁴⁹ / CDBG⁴⁸.
- Explore opportunities for future collaboration with peer municipalities, particularly as more cities in St. Louis County and beyond begin to follow Maplewood’s example in addressing cold-weather safety.

The Human Services Commission urges City leadership to adopt this proposal into the April 2026 bond package. Doing so will ensure Maplewood is prepared not just for

today's challenges, but for the future — with compassion, fiscal responsibility, and resilience.

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Memorandum



To: Mayor and City Council
From: Amber Withycombe, City Manager
Date: October 9, 2025
Re: **Human Services Commission Emergency Winter Shelter Proposal**

The Human Services Commission has submitted a proposal requesting that emergency winter shelter infrastructure for 10-12 individuals be incorporated into the April 2026 bond referendum for the City Hall and police facility project. The Commission’s detailed proposal outlines an operational model, projected costs, liability considerations, and space requirements for a weather-activated shelter that would serve vulnerable residents during extreme cold events.

Staff is grateful to the Commission for the considerable thought, research, and work that went into this proposal. The Commission has fulfilled its advisory role by identifying a community need, researching comparable municipal programs, developing cost estimates, and proposing a specific solution. This represents exactly the type of substantive policy development and community advocacy for which the Commission was established.

The proposal raises important questions about how Maplewood addresses homelessness and emergency services that warrant careful Council consideration. While staff recognizes the need the Commission has identified and appreciates the thorough analysis presented in their proposal, staff has identified several operational, financial, and liability considerations that require Council discussion before determining how to proceed. This memo provides staff analysis in response to the Commission’s proposal to inform Council’s discussion and seeks guidance on next steps.

Project Development Timeline and Capital Costs

The feasibility study to determine the scope of the City Hall and police facility bond project began in January 2025. Staff and Navigate have spent the past ten months developing the project based on identified operational needs for police accreditation compliance, ADA accessibility improvements, operational space requirements, and deferred maintenance needs. The preliminary design work, space programming, and cost estimates do not contemplate emergency shelter operations.

Incorporating shelter infrastructure at this stage would require design revisions and will increase project costs beyond the proposed \$10.6 million bond amount. The Commission’s proposal focuses primarily on operational costs but does not address the capital expense of modifying building systems, adding appropriate infrastructure for overnight occupancy, or meeting regulatory requirements for emergency shelter facilities. Given the tight timeline to finalize designs for the January 2026 ballot certification deadline, a fundamental redesign would impact the project schedule.

Additionally, the Commission’s proposal envisions dual-use space that transitions between daytime community use and overnight shelter. This operational model presents challenges within a police facility where spaces must accommodate training, inter-agency meetings, and community programming. Daily conversion between these substantially different uses would require dedicated staff time, specialized protocols, and could create scheduling conflicts that compromise both police operations and shelter effectiveness.

Operational Budget Constraints

The Commission’s estimated annual operating cost of \$17,000-\$23,400 (or up to \$28,400 including potential insurance increases) may understate the true cost of operating even a small-scale emergency shelter. While the proposal references regional shelter costs ranging from \$715 to \$7,392 per bed annually, Maplewood’s operational reality differs substantially from these comparisons. Staff size and resources are calibrated to provide core municipal services—police, public works, parks, administration—with limited flexibility for new programs requiring ongoing operational commitments. An emergency shelter, even one activated only during extreme weather events, would require dedicated staffing, training, coordination, supplies, and administrative oversight.

The proposal suggests leveraging federal Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) and Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) to offset costs. Maplewood is a subrecipient of CDBG funding through St. Louis County, which provides some grants management capacity. However, the City’s CDBG allocation for the near term is already committed. Accessing ESG funding would require HUD compliance, grant administration capacity beyond our current CDBG subrecipient role, and matching funds. The City does not currently participate in the St. Louis County Continuum of Care system, does not have dedicated housing or homeless services staff, and would need to expand administrative infrastructure to pursue and manage federal grants.

Voter Support Considerations

Staff have concerns regarding how incorporating emergency shelter into the bond referendum might affect voter support for the overall project. The Commission’s proposal acknowledges that shelter access would be referral-only with pre-identified participants, but public perception may differ from operational intent. Voters may have questions about facility security, impacts on neighboring properties, appropriateness of shelter operations within a police facility, and whether this represents the highest priority use of bond funds. Given that the City has not engaged in community consultation about this proposed aspect of the project, adding emergency shelter without broader public input could generate concerns. The bond project already requires an estimated increased debt service levy from \$0.28 to \$0.53 per \$100 assessed value. Adding this component requires careful consideration of whether it might affect support for critical facility improvements that have been developed over the past ten months.

Insurance and Liability Considerations

On October 7, Chief Nighbor and I met with representatives from the St. Louis Area Insurance Trust (SLAIT), the City’s liability and workers’ compensation insurance provider. SLAIT is a self-funded insurance pool serving more than two dozen professionally managed cities in the St. Louis region. Unlike traditional commercial insurance, SLAIT pools risk across member cities

with similar operational profiles and risk factors. This shared-risk model allows members to secure coverage at lower costs and benefit from investment income after claims are paid.

During our meeting, SLAIT representatives identified significant concerns about emergency shelter operations. SLAIT’s policy coverage for municipalities excludes certain high-risk activities. While emergency shelter is not explicitly detailed in these exclusions—because no SLAIT member has previously proposed this operational model—any substantial change in a member city’s operations or risk profile requires SLAIT Board of Trustees approval to add coverage for new activities.

SLAIT was formed specifically to pool risk across municipalities that carry similar operational risks. When one member becomes “less similar” to the rest in operations or risk factors, the Board has historically been inclined to remove that member from the pool to protect the other participating cities. The addition of emergency shelter operations—with attendant risks related to overnight occupancy, vulnerable populations, potential incidents requiring emergency response, and exposure to claims—would fundamentally alter Maplewood’s risk profile compared to other SLAIT members.

Should the City lose SLAIT membership, Maplewood would need to seek coverage through alternative public entity insurers such as the Missouri Public Entity Risk Management fund (MOPERM), the Missouri Intergovernmental Risk Management Association (MIRMA), or the commercial insurance market. While other public entity pools exist in Missouri, none provide the same combination of comprehensive coverage, regional expertise, and cost advantages that SLAIT offers to professionally managed municipalities in the St. Louis region.

Alternative public entity pools have various limitations compared to SLAIT’s specialized model. For example, MOPERM has historically asserted sovereign immunity defenses and placed strict limits on payouts—as recently as 2018, MOPERM asserted that its enabling legislation prohibits it from paying more than \$2 million for a single occurrence. For a city facing a multi-million dollar judgment related to police operations, civil rights claims, or other significant liability, such coverage caps could leave Maplewood responsible for substantial additional costs. Commercial insurance premiums for a city operating an emergency shelter would likely be significantly higher than current SLAIT contributions, potentially adding tens of thousands of dollars annually to operating costs.

Alternative Approaches

Staff recognizes the need the Commission has identified. Maplewood does have unhoused residents who face dangerous conditions during extreme weather events. In January 2025, staff implemented a Cold Weather Response Protocol (referenced in the Commission’s proposal) that directs Police and Fire personnel to connect unhoused individuals with regional warming shelters during cold weather. As a last resort when regional shelters are at capacity, the protocol authorizes temporary use of the City Hall elevator lobby until the start of the next business day, when the Social Services Coordinator can connect individuals to appropriate resources.

During the 2024-2025 winter season, the City did not need to activate the emergency lobby protocol. The Social Services Coordinator proactively canvassed the community prior to

predicted extreme weather events and successfully arranged temporary accommodations through regional partners for those willing to accept assistance. This outcome demonstrates both the effectiveness of proactive coordination and the current manageable scale of need.

However, this success also reveals important operational realities. The protocol worked because of the Social Services Coordinator's established relationships with regional shelter networks, the relatively small number of individuals requiring assistance, and, critically, individuals' willingness to accept referrals. Not all individuals experiencing homelessness accept offered shelter, even in dangerous conditions, due to mental health challenges, substance use disorders, distrust of institutional settings, concerns about facility rules, or other barriers. A city-operated emergency shelter would likely encounter similar acceptance challenges, meaning facility capacity alone does not guarantee utilization.

In staff's view, addressing homelessness effectively requires systems-level responses that may exceed the capacity of individual municipalities, particularly one of Maplewood's size and resources. Our staff collaborates with St. Louis County and City through our Social Services Coordinator position, connecting residents to resources, regional shelters, and support services. Strengthening these partnerships and regional coordination may be more sustainable than attempting to operate an independent municipal shelter with limited resources. Additionally, we may want to consider establishing new partnerships with organizations such as St. Louis Winter Outreach and Urban City Services to assist in expanding existing emergency warming programs without requiring City-operated facilities.

The Commission's proposal references successful models in cities like St. Louis City, Houston, Spokane, Westminster, Colorado (population ~115,000), and Sonoma, California (population ~11,000). St. Louis City operates a Department of Homeless Services that serves as the HUD-mandated Continuum of Care (CoC) lead agency, applies for and administers federal CoC and ESG funding, and establishes coordinated entry systems and service standards. Houston and Spokane utilize nonprofit-led CoC models with city funding and partnership. All three larger cities have infrastructure, dedicated staffing, and administrative capacity for federal grant administration that Maplewood currently lacks.

Sonoma, though comparable in population to Maplewood, operates under substantially different conditions. Sonoma uses a dedicated facility called the Haven Building, described as the "City's Emergency Homeless Shelter," a purpose-built shelter rather than multi-use space that converts between community functions and overnight shelter. Sonoma's activation protocols require consultation with County Health Services, Emergency Management, and other agencies before opening. Participants must be listed in a formal "by-name list" coordinated entry system used by Sonoma Valley homeless providers, and the warming center explicitly operates to "supplement existing Sonoma County Winter Shelter operations" rather than functioning independently. This demonstrates that even comparable-sized cities rely on dedicated shelter facilities, formal CoC integration, and county-level coordination rather than the dual-use, independent operational model proposed for Maplewood.

Even in cities with dedicated homeless services departments, emergency shelter operations are often contracted to nonprofit partners rather than operated directly by municipal staff, as St.

Louis does with Peter & Paul Community Services operating the city-owned Biddle House facility. This partnership model may offer a more viable path for Maplewood than direct municipal operation.

If Council wishes to explore emergency weather shelter options, staff recommends pursuing this work outside the April 2026 bond referendum timeline. This would allow for community engagement, thorough analysis of operational models, exploration of regional partnerships with St. Louis County or nonprofit service providers, assessment of insurance and liability implications, and development of sustainable funding mechanisms.

Seeking Council Direction

Staff welcomes Council feedback on how to proceed with the Commission's proposal and seeks guidance on the following questions:

- Should emergency shelter infrastructure be incorporated into the April 2026 bond referendum? If so, is Council prepared to adjust the referendum timeline for design modifications, revised bond communications, and a community engagement process?
- If emergency shelter is not included in the bond referendum, does Council wish to pursue alternative approaches to emergency weather assistance through regional partnerships or future independent initiatives?
- Should staff work with the Human Services Commission to develop a longer-term strategic plan for homeless services that includes exploration of partnership models, funding mechanisms, and operational capacity building?
- Does Council wish to receive additional information on specific aspects of this proposal, including insurance quotes, capital cost estimates, or analysis of regional partnership options?

The Commission has raised an important issue that deserves thoughtful consideration. Staff is committed to working with Council and the Commission to identify approaches that align with Maplewood's operational capacity and resource constraints while addressing the needs of vulnerable residents.