Homeless Needs Assessment and Action Plan

for

Leesburg Florida

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Presentation of Findings and Strategic Action Plan Recommendations
to
the City of Leesburg Florida

by

Marbut Consulting: Robert G. Marbut Jr., Ph.D.

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Written Report - August 30, 2015
Presentation - September 28, 2015

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Executive Summary

City of Leesburg tasked Marbut Consulting with conducting a Homeless Needs Assessment and then developing an Action Plan to evaluate and improve the efficiency and organization of homeless service providers.

In order to develop practical recommendations, Marbut Consulting:
- studied and inventoried homeless services throughout City of Leesburg,
- examined Point-in-Time-Count (PITC) reports,
- analyzed statistics and reports from local agencies,
- conducted a Survey of individuals experiencing “street-level” homelessness,
- interviewed individuals experiencing homelessness,
- conducted meetings with stakeholders,
- made street-level observations,
- posed as a homeless person within City of Leesburg in order to understand what its like to be homeless in Leesburg and to better understand the movement and circulation of the homeless community.

Marbut Consulting evaluated the current homeless operations within Leesburg using national best practices and the Seven Guiding Principles of Homeless Transformation as the key measuring tools. Marbut Consulting then conducted a needs assessment and gaps analysis between existing inventory and identified needs, including the types of services (qualitative) and capacity of services (quantitative) needed within City of Leesburg. Dr. Robert Marbut started formally on June 3, 2015. It should be noted that Dr. Marbut made two prior visits to the City of Leesburg on January 15-16, 2015 and May 12, 2015 which were hosted by Joe Shipes of the Leesburg Partnership and by Al Minner the City Manager respectively. Marbut Consulting finished the written report on August 30, 2015 and Dr. Marbut made a formal presentation to the City of Leesburg on September 28, 2015.

The following are Marbut Consulting’s big-picture Observations and Findings:

- For 2015, there were 265 persons sheltered and unsheltered in Lake County, of these 265 persons, 178 were unsheltered and 87 were sheltered. Of the 178 unsheltered persons, 133 were unsheltered single adults. It is important to note that nationwide PITCs almost always undercount the homeless population especially individuals who are unsheltered.

Note: For the purpose of this report, “street-level homelessness” is a sub-set of the overall homeless population and consists of individuals sleeping and living on the street, under bridges, near golf courses, beaches and wooded encampments. In most communities individuals experiencing “street-level” homelessness are generally the same individuals defined as “unsheltered” by the Point-in-Time Count.
- 61.4% of the unsheltered (eg street-level homelessness) lived in Lake County for over 1 year before becoming homeless.

The fact that 61.4% of the unsheltered homeless population has lived in Lake County for over 1 year before becoming homeless means that a very high proportion of the local chronic population is “home-grown” (eg raised and/or lived in Lake County for a significant amount of time).

- 37.4% have been homeless for longer than 1 year, and 56.4% have been homeless 2 or more times within the last 3 years. This indicates high levels of “chronic” homelessness.

Note: HUD defines “chronic” homelessness as an individual being homeless for over one year straight and/or has 4 or more episodes of homelessness in the last 3 years and/or a person with a disabling condition living on the street. This researcher defines “super-chronic” as person who has been experiencing homelessness for over 5 years.

- Of the unsheltered adults, 37.7% are military veterans. Compared to other Florida communities and most USA communities, Lake County has a much higher percentage of unsheltered individuals who are military veterans. This is surprising since there are no major military nor VA operations within Lake County.

- A data analysis of the individuals experiencing homelessness who have had the most recent highest number of incidents/contacts with the Leesburg Police Department found the following:

  + The median age is 51.4 years old and the average age is 46.7 years old. These ages are older compared to other Florida and USA communities. This correlates with, and indicates a relatively higher level of chronic homeless population.

  + The median length of time since first contact with the Leesburg Police Department to the time of this report is 6.6 years with an average of 7.6 years. The median/average time-length since first contact with law enforcement is surprisingly very high and indicates three important issues:

    1- There is a high proportion of the local homeless population that is “homegrown.”

    2- The local population is significantly very “chronic.”

    3- Leesburg lacks crisis intervention services.
- The Leesburg Police Department has had incidents/contacts with 754 distinct individuals (eg unduplicated) who have experienced homelessness over the last 5.5 years, one new individual every 2.6 days.

- Individuals who are experiencing homelessness have accounted for 19.3% of all incidents/contacts by the Leesburg Police Department over the last 5.5 years.

- It is important to realize that very little of the “re-encountered” police activity is a result of individuals “passing-through,” instead most of the police activity is with individuals who have been living in the Leesburg area of a long time.

- The homeless population within Lake County has 3 “flow-characteristics”:
  
  1- The homeless population within Clermont circulates between Clermont and Orlando, and has very little contact with other Lake County Communities.

  2- The homeless population within Leesburg circulates between Leesburg, Tavares, Eustis and Mt. Dora.

  3- Based on several sources, there are about 2,000 individuals experiencing homelessness camping in the woods within Lake, Marion and Sumter Counties, it is reported that a very high percentage of these individuals are veterans, most of whom are experiencing post traumatic stress disorders. Since this was beyond the scope of this engagement, this researcher did not attempt to confirm this observation of others.

- Most individuals experiencing homelessness within Leesburg use the “trail system” as a primary transportation path, which reduces conspicuity. The “trail system” has become a “hidden pathway” for the movement of individuals experiencing homelessness.

- Many of the “hangout” areas and encampments within Leesburg are located around the intersecting nodes of the “trails” and near establishments that sell liquor/alcohol.

- There is no “come-as-you-are” program and/or facility in Leesburg that addresses the 24/7 emergency needs of individuals experiencing “street-level” homelessness.

- It is very important to realize that the lack of a 24/7 emergency program means Leesburg is not “Pottinger Compliant,” which in turn means the Leesburg Police Department is very restricted in how it interacts with individuals who are experiencing homelessness. It is critical to understand that due to a series of court rulings (often referred to as “Pottinger vs. City of Miami” or simply “Pottinger”), Law Enforcement Agencies and Law Enforcement Officers will not be able to enforce many ordinances until the community has a fully operational emergency center on a 24/7/168/365 basis.

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There is a widely held myth that Leesburg has and provides “too many services.” The fact is, relative to other Florida cities, this is simply not true. In fact it is the lack of comprehensive services that has allowed Leesburg homeless community to become so “chronic.” Without treatment and engagement, the problems are simply getting worse.

It should be remembered that it is the weather, not programming services, that initially draws homeless individuals to Florida. Communities with, or on the path way to, beaches, palm trees and golf courses will always attract homeless individuals because of the nice and moderate climate. Then if the community is enabling, homeless individuals will continue to stay on the streets and in encampments.

There is not a connected “system” of care. Service providers are mostly working in their own isolated silos.

The issues of homelessness within Leesburg are high for such a small city, and based on police and citizen interviews, the problem has gotten worse over the last two years. Anecdotal information also indicates that many of the encounters with individuals experiencing homelessness has become more aggressive in nature.

The following are Marbut Consulting’s major action Recommendations:

1 - Open a Come-As-You-Are Services Center.

Open a basic 24/7/168/365 Come-As-You-Are (CAYA) Services Center for single homeless men and women to dramatically improve the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery by co-locating and integrating adult homeless services at one location. If Leesburg goes it alone, this site needs to be within Leesburg proper. If Leesburg joint ventures with other cities within Lake County, this site should be centrally located to the partner cities in order to maximize use.

2 - Transform HMIS from a “Score Keeper” to a “Proactive Case Management Tool”

The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) needs to be transformed from a "Score Keeping Model" to a "Proactive Case Management Tool." To accomplish this, the software program may need a couple component upgrades. Additionally, to reduce impediments to universal use, a system-wide-all-agency information release form should be utilized by all agencies. Furthermore, in order to promote universal agency participation, funding to service agencies by foundations, government agencies and the Continuum of Care should become contingent on being proactive participants in HMIS.
3 - The Culture of How the Community Addresses Homelessness Needs to Change

The entire Leesburg Community needs to change how it addresses the issue of homelessness. This includes service agencies, faith-based organizations, volunteers, staffs, donors, funders, government agencies, programs, residents, tourists and the homeless community. The mission should no longer be to “serve” the homeless community, instead the mission should be to dramatically and consequentially increase “street graduation” rates. Specifically, the Leesburg Community needs to:

a - Move from a “Culture of Enablement” to a “Culture of Engagement,”
b - Move from “Agency-centric” to “System-centric” funding and processes,
c - Move from “Out-put Measurements” to “Out-come Measurements.”
Study Scope

Phase 1 - Inventory of Services:

The Consultant will ascertain information about the types and quantities of service being provided in Leesburg. The Consultant will then perform an inventory of homeless services within the City of Leesburg proper and selected service sites within Lake County.

Phase 2 - Analysis of Recent PITC Data, with a Field Survey and Field Observations:

The Consultant will conduct an analysis of the recent Point-in-Time-Count (PITC) compared to earlier PITCs. The Consultant will also conduct a series of field observations analyzing flow and movement patterns. These field observations will include visiting encampment sites as well as other gathering sites. The Consultant will then compare the PITC data with data from the Leesburg Police Department and the field observations.

Phase 3 - Needs Assessment Data Analysis:

The Consultant will conduct needs assessment of the types of services (qualitative) and capacity of services (quantitative) needed in the City of Leesburg. This will be based on street level observations and data from Point-in-Time-Counts (PITCs), Homeless Management Information System reports (HMIS), Leesburg Police Department data and agency reports. The Consultant will conduct a gap analysis of services between existing inventory and identified needs.

Phase 4 - Conceptual Analysis of Potential “Pottinger Qualified” Sites:

The Consultant will provide a conceptual level analysis of potential “Pottinger” qualified homeless service center sites in and near Leesburg.

Notes About Scope of Work:

- The Consultant will produce a written report (10-20 pages). Additionally, the Consultant will present this report at a public meeting/forum chosen by the City of Leesburg on a mutually agreed date.

- Many improvements will “organically” materialize during the gap analysis and national best practice reviews. During this time frame, Marbut Consulting will suggest improvement opportunities that naturally arise throughout this “journey.”
- The analysis of potential homeless service sites will be at a conceptual level (eg not at a design document level regarding environmental, design and construction details).

- The scope of work was limited to “study and development of recommendations” only.

- If mutually agreed upon by the parties, Marbut Consulting is available for a contract extension to help implement the finalized approved plan.
Observations and Findings

Basic Data:

- **Lake County Point-in-Time Count (PITC) Data.** A data analysis of the recent Federally mandated annual Point-in-Time Count found the following:
  
  + For 2015, there were 265 persons sheltered and unsheltered in Lake County, of these 265 persons, 178 were unsheltered and 87 were sheltered. Of the 178 unsheltered persons, 133 were unsheltered single adults. It is important to note that nationwide PITCs almost always undercount the homeless population especially individuals who are unsheltered.

  Note: For the purpose of this report, “street-level homelessness” is a sub-set of the overall homeless population and consists of individuals sleeping and living on the street, under bridges, near golf courses, beaches and wooded encampments. In most communities individuals experiencing “street-level” homelessness are generally the same individuals defined as “unsheltered” by the PITC.

  + 61.4% of the unsheltered (eg street-level homelessness) lived in Lake County for over 1 year before becoming homeless.

  + 37.4% have been homeless for longer than 1 year.

  + 86.0% are of males and 14.0% are females.

  + 56.4% have been homeless 2 or more times within the last 3 years.

  + Of the unsheltered adults, 69.6% are White/Caucasian and 30.4% are Black/African-American.

  + Of the unsheltered adults, 37.7% are military veterans.

- **Leesburg Police Department Data.** A data analysis of the 32 individuals experiencing homelessness who have had the most recent highest number of incidents/contacts with the Leesburg Police Department found the following (this group of 32 is a sub-set group of the 133 unsheltered persons in the PITC data above):
  
  + The median age is 51.4 years old and the average age is 46.7 years old. When you take out 4 juveniles who recently became adults the median age is 52.9 years old and the average age is 50.2 years old.
+ 90.6% are White/Caucasian and 9.4% are Black/African-American.

+ 87.5% are males and 12.5% are females.

+ The median length of time since first contact with the Leesburg Police Department to the time of this report is 6.6 years with an average of 7.6 years. When you take out 4 juveniles who recently became adults the median length of time since first contact with the Leesburg Police Department to the time of this report is 8.4 years with an average of 7.9 years.

- The Leesburg Police Department has had incidents/contacts with 754 distinct individuals (eg unduplicated) who have experienced homelessness over the last 5.5 years, one new individual every 2.6 days.

- Individuals who are experiencing homelessness have accounted for 19.3% of all incidents/contacts by the Leesburg Police Department over the last 5.5 years.

Macro Data Observations:

- The median/average time-length since first contact with law enforcement is surprisingly very high which indicates three important issues:
  1- There is a high proportion of the local homeless population that is “homegrown.”
  2- The local population is significantly very “chronic.”
  3- Leesburg lacks crisis intervention services.

*Note: HUD defines “chronic” homelessness as an individual being homeless for over one year straight and/or has 4 or more episodes of homelessness in the last 3 years and/or a person with a disabling condition living on the street. This researcher defines “super-chronic” as person who has been experiencing homelessness for over 5 years.*

- Based on the the fact that 61.4% of the unsheltered homeless population has lived in Lake County for over 1 year before becoming homeless means that a high proportion of the local chronic population is “home-grown” (eg raised and/or lived in Lake County for a significant amount of time).

- Compared to other Florida and USA communities, the average age is older. This correlates with, and indicates, a relatively higher level of chronic homeless population.
- Based on other Florida communities, the percent of White/Caucasian is higher than expected.

- Compared to other Florida communities and most USA communities, Lake County has a high percentage of unsheltered individuals who are military veterans. This is surprising since there are no major military nor VA operations within Lake County.

- Compared to other Florida communities, the average percent of males is slightly higher. Normally, higher percentages of males directly correlates with higher violent crime rates within the homeless community.

- It is important to realize that very little of the police activity is a result of individuals “passing-through,” instead most of the police activity is with individuals who have been living in the Leesburg area of a long time.

Flow and Patterns of Individuals Experiencing Homelessness:

- Based on PITC data, Leesburg Police Department data, interviews with individuals experiencing homelessness, interviews with service providers and street level observations, the homeless population within Lake County has 3 “flow-characteristics”:

  1- The homeless population within Clermont circulates between Clermont and Orlando, and has very little contact with other Lake County Communities.

  2- The homeless population within Leesburg circulates between Leesburg, Tavares, Eustis and Mt. Dora.

  3- Based on several sources, there are about 2,000 individuals experiencing homelessness camping in the woods within Lake, Marion and Sumter Counties, a very high percentage of these individuals are veterans, most of whom are experiencing post traumatic stress disorders. Since this was beyond the scope of this engagement, this researcher did not attempt to confirm this observation of others.

- The mobility rate between the Cities of Leesburg and Eustis is very high, but the mobility rate between Leesburg/Eustis and the City of Clermont is very low. This is occurring because the transportation system between Clermont and Leesburg/Eustis is poor and because many individuals have tight ties to their respective communities.

- Most individuals experiencing homelessness within Leesburg use the “trail system” as a primary transportation path, which reduces conspicuity. The “trail system” has become a “hidden pathway” for the movement of individuals experiencing homelessness.
- Many of the “hangout” areas and encampments within Leesburg are located around the intersecting nodes of the “trails” and establishments that sell liquor/alcohol.

Homeless Services:

- There is no “come-as-you-are” program and/or facility in Leesburg that addresses the 24/7 emergency needs of individuals experiencing “street-level” homelessness.

*Note: “Emergency level” services address the short term needs of individuals with the goal of being a portal to intermediate and long-term recovery programs. Emergency programs provide the basic level of services with very little “paperwork” (eg there are very few barriers of entry, normally entry is blocked only because of violent behavior or the need for critical medical care).*

- There is no 24/7 “in-take” portal program/facility/system to triage individuals who are experiencing homelessness who have recently arrived in Leesburg. Likewise there is not “in-take” portal for local individuals who have recently become homeless.

- It is very important to realize that the lack of a 24/7 emergency program means Leesburg is not “Pottinger Compliant,” which in turn means the Leesburg Police Department is very restricted in how it interacts with individuals who are experiencing homelessness. It is critical to understand that due to a series of court rulings (often referred to as “Pottinger vs. City of Miami” or simply “Pottinger”), Law Enforcement Agencies and Law Enforcement Officers will not be able to enforce many ordinances until the community has a fully operational emergency center on a 24/7/168/365 basis.

- There is a widely held myth that Leesburg has and provides “too many services.” The fact is relative to other Florida cities this is simply not true. In fact it is the lack of comprehensive services that has allowed Leesburg homeless community to become so “chronic.” Without treatment and engagement, the problems are simply getting worse.

It should be remembered that it is the weather, not programming services, that initially draws homeless individuals to Florida. Communities with, or on the path way to, beaches, palm trees and golf courses will always attract homeless individuals because of the nice and moderate climate. Then if the community is enabling, homeless individuals will continue to stay on the streets and in encampments.

- There is not a connected “system” of care. Service providers are mostly working in their own isolated silos.
- There is not a coordinated intake system that assesses and triages individual service needs. There needs to be a way to triage and connect individuals to customized and appropriate levels of care based on presenting issues.

- Sadly, many individuals who are experiencing homelessness pursue food services, not holistic programing that address their root cause(s) of their homeless condition. For the most part, supportive services are not connected to, nor co-located with the distribution of meals and food. There is a big opportunity to connect meals and food with holistic services.

- Between the search of meals, many of the individuals who are experiencing homelessness go to the library to get break from elements.

Other Observations:

- The issues of homelessness within Leesburg are high for such a small city, and based on police and citizen interviews, the problem has gotten worse over the last two years. Anecdotal information also indicates that many of the encounters with individuals experiencing homelessness has become more aggressive in nature.

- There are very important issues relating to families with children and unaccompanied minors/youth who are experiencing homelessness within the Leesburg area that need addressing, but “families with children” was not part of the official tasking of this report.
Strategic Action Plan Recommendations

1 - Open a Come-As-You-Are Services Center

Open a basic 24/7/168/365 Come-As-You-Are (CAYA) Services Center for single homeless men and women to dramatically improve the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery by co-locating and integrating adult homeless services at one location. If Leesburg goes it alone, this site needs to be within Leesburg proper. If Leesburg joint ventures with other cities within Lake County, this site should be centrally located to the partner cities in order to maximize use.

Importance of Weather:

- The moderate weather of Florida, South Texas and Southern California makes these three parts of the country highly attractive inbound target areas for individuals experiencing homelessness who want to visit and/or relocate from northern colder/harsher environments. Individuals very seldom relocate because of services, in fact there is some evidence that 24/7 holistic recovery programs deters inbound relocation.

- Lake County is on a major transit corridor for homeless individuals moving north to south, south to north.

- Whether Lake County is a target destination or a passing-through corridor, Lake County will always have to address the issue of new inbound individuals who are experiencing homelessness.

- It is very important to understand the passing-through “transients” who may or may not be experiencing homelessness are not the main causal factors to police activities and complaints of the general public. In fact, very little of the police activity are caused by individuals “passing-through.”

Pottinger Case Law and Tie to Services:

- It is very important to note that due to a series of court rulings (often referred to as “Pottinger vs. City of Miami” or simply “Pottinger”), Law Enforcement Agencies and Law Enforcement Officers will not be able to enforce most ordinances until fully operational facility is opened on a 24/7/168/365 basis.

Location, Construction and Set-up:

- If Leesburg goes it alone, this Services Center site needs to be within Leesburg proper. If Leesburg joint ventures with other cities within Lake County, the Services Center site should be centrally located to the partner cities in order to maximize use. See Exhibit 5 -
Basic Evaluation of Potential CAYA Service Center Locations on Page 34 for a concept-level evaluation of potential sites.

- Because of the financial realities, the Services Center needs to have an affordable set-up and start-up cost. See Exhibit 3 - Generic Base Start-up Capital Budget on Page 32 for a baseline capital budget for a CAYA Services Center in Leesburg.

- It will be very important to have good and safe ingress/egress.

- It will be very important to have “ergonomic buffers.”

- The Services Center needs to have physical office space for security, in-take services, case management, group meetings, etc.

The Services Center must also have a prep kitchen, eating area, bathrooms and showers.

Sleeping areas can be as simple as tented sleeping areas.

The Need for 24/7 Services:

- It is very important to understand that individuals experiencing homelessness do not “graduate” from street-life back into general society if they are enabled to stay on the streets, in parks or in encampments. Likewise, individuals experiencing homelessness do not graduate from street-life by being incarcerated in a jail. A person will never experience recovery if they are sleeping under a bridge or sleeping on a jail cell floor since they are not in a formal 24/7 recovery program.

- The most successful and proven way to increase the rate of street graduations is for individuals to be in formal programs that provide holistic, transformational services 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Holistic and transformational means comprehensive services including master case management, mental/behavioral health, substance abuse treatment, life skills training, job training, job placement, etc.

- The lack of emergency level holistic services is the primary reason why there are so many individuals who have become chronically homeless in Leesburg.

- National best practices indicate that communities need to have at least one 24/7/168/365 “Come-As-You-Are” services center as part of their overall continuum of care (sometimes referred to as a low-demand-shelter). City of Leesburg does not have a true come-as-you-are 24/7/168/365 facility anywhere.
Operations:

- Because of the financial realities, the Services Center should be a basic facility that is easy to maintain and relatively inexpensive to operate. See Exhibit 4 - *Generic Annual Operations Budget* on Page 33 for an example of a baseline operations budget.

- As many Leesburg/Lake County service partner organizations/agencies/programs as possible should be recruited to co-locate their specific services for adult men and women experiencing homelessness to this 24/7 Services Center. As much as possible, “specialty service providers” and “referral service providers” should be encouraged to operate part-time within the Services Center.

- Potential anchor service partners:
  
  + LifeStream should become the coordinating partner and provide master case management, mental health, substance abuse services and administrative services.
Christian Care Center should be asked to provide the daily on-site dinner and off-site medical, dental and vision services, as well as other referral services.

Salvation Army should be asked to provide the daily on-site breakfast as well as referral services.

Churches, synagogues and other faith based and civic organizations should be encouraged to provide lunches and when needed breakfasts and dinners.

- All agencies, programs and service providers should adopt the “culture of transformation” in all aspects of their operations. The focus needs to be on the overall mission of reducing street-level homelessness and graduating people from the streets to becoming productive community members.

- Once operational, all street feeding programs and food pantry programs for single adult men and women experiencing homelessness should be encouraged to relocate to (or at least coordinated with) Services Center.

- As many of the following services should be included within the Services Center as possible (full-time and/or part-time and/or as a referral service):

  + Engagement Into the Services Center:
    * Outreach - interface with Homeless Outreach Teams (HOTs)
    * Intake, registration and assessment
    * Master Case Management

  + Medical:
    * Medical (off-site referrals)
    * Dental (off-site referrals)
    * Vision (mostly off-site referrals)
    * If possible, pharmacy services (on-site)
    * Mental health (on-site and off-site referrals)
    * Addictive disorders and substance abuse services (on-site and off-site referrals)

  + Job Placement Services:
    * Legal services and ID recovery
    * Life skills training
    * Job skills training (includes interview and resume training)
    * Job placement and retention coaching
    * Recruitment of local businesses to create job opportunities
+ Hygiene Services:
  * 24/7 bathrooms
  * Showers
  * Hygiene skills training and services
  * Hair cut services (to be presentable for job interviews)

+ Overnight Sleeping:
  * Low demand sheltering
  * Transitional living (by referral)

+ Feeding:
  * Establishment of a commercial kitchen
  * Food and meals
  * Coordination of meals (delivery and prep from non-profits and churches)

+ Other Support Services:
  * Clothing closet
  * Housing out-placement
  * Veteran services
  * Daytime activities
  * Property storage
  * Donation center

+ Administration:
  * Administrative services
  * Security
  * Storage
  * Volunteer coordination
  * Community service and on-site work crews

- The Services Center must be a “Good Neighbor.”

- For safety reasons, the queuing for intake must occur inside of the Services Center not on the street.

- Safety, health and hygiene are all negatively impacted by dirty, soiled and cluttered environments. Therefore, Services Center needs to embrace national best practices of “Look, Feel and Smell” standards:
  + all areas need to be organized neatly and uncluttered (look)
  + all areas need to be warm and nurturing (feel)
  + all areas need to smell like a nice home - should not smell dirty and soiled, nor should it smell like cleaning solutions (smell)
- Having high standards dignifies the folks being helped while fostering higher standards for staff and volunteers. Individuals respond to their surroundings. Neat, clean and warm feeling environments lead to more positive outcomes than dirty, soiled and cluttered environments. Embracing a high environmental quality also helps in being a good neighbor.

- How a facility is operated is as equally important to where a facility is sited. The goal is to reduce the hanging-out and minimize the “crumb-trail” between service agencies by encouraging individuals to come into programming.

- High quality environments also increase resources to agencies in the following four ways:
  - increases volunteers
  - increases funding
  - increases staff member and volunteer productivity
  - extends the useful life of the physical plant and infrastructure

- It is very important that the broader Leesburg Community needs to realize this as a problem of the “whole” and that this affects the entire Leesburg Community. It is therefore critical to have a City-wide “system” that is holistic and integrated.

### 2 - Transform HMIS from a “Score Keeper” to a “Proactive Case Management Tool”

The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) needs to be transformed from a "Score Keeping Model" to a "Proactive Case Management Tool." To accomplish this, the software program may need a couple component upgrades. Additionally, to reduce impediments to universal use, a system-wide-all-agency information release form should be utilized by all agencies. Furthermore, in order to promote universal agency participation, funding to service agencies by foundations, government agencies and the Continuum of Care should become contingent on being proactive participants in HMIS.

- HMIS provides a helpful “score-keeper” function, however, HMIS needs to move from being a passive score-keeper to being a proactive case management tool within a truly integrated Master Case Management System.

- Using HMIS as a proactive case management tool includes using it for the following activities: tracking recovery action plans, making referrals to providers, tracking bed availability in real-time and using dashboard data to make tactical and strategic decisions about operations.

- Data entry needs to be “real-time” and “universal” across all agencies in order to facilitate coordination of care across the Continuum of Care.
- An “universal release” could be developed and utilized by all homeless agencies participating in the Mid Florida Homeless Coalition and Continuum of Care. Before implementing the universal release, each provider will need HIPAA and data security training to ensure they protect the privacy and best interest of the individuals experiencing homelessness. There are templates that exist that can help facilitate real-time data sharing and improved out-comes reporting, which could position the Continuum of Care for new funding opportunities.

3 - The Culture of How the Community Addresses Homelessness Needs to Change

The entire Leesburg Community needs to change how it addresses the issue of homelessness. This includes service agencies, faith-based organizations, volunteers, staffs, donors, funders, government agencies, programs, residents, tourists and the homeless community. The mission should no longer be to “serve” the homeless community, instead the mission should be to dramatically and consequentially increase “street graduation” rates. Specifically, the Leesburg Community needs to:

a - Move from a “Culture of Enablement” to a “Culture of Engagement.”

b - Move from “Agency-centric” to “System-centric” funding and processes.

c - Move from “Out-put Measurements” to “Out-come Measurements.”

- If the greater Leesburg community keeps doing the same activities in the same ways, the number of street-level chronic homeless individuals will dramatically increase and likely become more aggressive. There needs to be an across-the-board “Change in Thinking and a Change in Doing.”

- The mission should no longer be to “serve” the homeless community, instead the mission should be to dramatically and consequentially increase “street graduation” rates. A street graduation occurs when an individual moves from living on the street (or in an encampment) into a sustainable quality of life that allows the individual to be a productive citizen of the community.

- The entire community needs to move from a culture of enablement to a culture that engages individuals experiencing homelessness in all aspects of daily life. Free food, handouts of camping equipment and cash from panhandling - although well intended by nice folks - actually perpetuates and increases homelessness through enablement. Rather than street handouts of food and cash, donations should instead be redirected to high performing agencies. A media and public awareness campaign needs to be developed to educate and encourage the community to move from a culture of enablement to a culture of engagement.
- The culture needs to move from measuring “out-puts” of service to one that measures “out-comes” of systematic change. Success should be measured using substantive “out-come” metrics (are street graduation rates increasing or is the percent of homeless individuals in jail decreasing, rather than how many meals are served or how many people slept in building overnight).

- Homeless individuals who want help, should be provided engaging help. Individuals who turn down help, should not be enabled.

- “Hanging-out” should be replaced by “program participation.” Every effort possible must be made to engage individuals into programming.

- Engagement should never be mean - instead engagement should always be kind, caring and compassionate.

- The City of Leesburg may want to consider instituting a curfew of the trail system (maybe “dust-to-dawn”) and/or increasing police patrols of the trail system (maybe on bikes or ATVs).

- The City of Leesburg may want to consider establishing HOTeams (Homeless Outreach Teams) in order to positively engage individuals experiencing homelessness.
Immediate Next Steps

- Get started and do not get bogged down in politics or NIMBY’ism. Simply just start!!

- Start by pursuing a joint venture Services Center with other cities within the “triangle,” especially Eustis.

- If Eustis wants to partner, then start a formal site selection of possible sites along 441 between the airport and county criminal justice center.

- If Eustis chooses not to joint venture, then start a formal site selection of possible sites within the City of Leesburg.
Exhibit 1 -
Program/Agency Site Visits, Tours, Meetings and Conference Calls (partial listing)

Kent Adcock
Habitat for Humanity Lake-Sumter FL
Chief Executive Officer

Kevin Bowers
Hope & Recovery Center Rehabilitative Services - LifeStream Tally Road Campus
Director –

W. David Braughton, MSSA
LifeStream Behavioral Center
Chief Operating Officer

Timothy Bridges
Lake Community Action Agency
Director of Program Operations

Lesha Buchbinder
Early Learning Coalition of Lake City
Executive Director

Denise Burry
Forward Paths Foundation
President

Welton G. Cadwell
Lake City Florida
City Commissioner, District 5

Jonathan M. Cherry
LifeStream Behavioral Center
President & C.E.O.
Melissa J. Curry
City of Leesburg
Library Youth Services Supervisor

Hon. Elise Dennison
City of Leesburg
Mayor

Ellen Didion
Sumter Sunshine Foundation
Executive Director

Lucy B. Gangone
City of Leesburg
Library Director

Darren Gray
City of Clermont
City Manager

Rick Hankey
Hope & Recovery Center Hospital - LifeStream Tally Road Campus
Sr. Vice President

Lieutenant Matt Hedgren
The Salvation Army - Lake and Sumter Counties
Corps Officer

Tessa Hibbard
President / CenterState Bank
Leesburg Chamber of Commerce / Branch Manager

Chief Robert W. Hicks
Leesburg Police Department
Chief of Police
Hon. Michael L. Holland  
City of Eustis  
Mayor

Officer Mike Howard  
City of Leesburg  
Code Enforcement Officer

Bill Jones  
Christian Care Center  
Executive Director

Rev. Joanne Knight  
Come As You Are Ministry  
Pastor/Founder

Timothy Layne  
Early Learning Coalition of Lake City  
Family Services Director

Jeanne Leopold  
Catholic Charities of Central Florida, Diocese of Orlando  
Caseworker

James H. Lowe, CCAP  
Lake Community Action Agency / Mid Florida Homeless Coalition  
Executive Director / Co-Founder

Dusty Hill Matthews  
City of Leesburg  
Library Adult Services Supervisor

DC Maudlin  
City of Leesburg  
Director of Public Works
Jim Miller, CCIM, ALC
Grizzard Real Estate
Commercial Real Estate Group

Al Minner
City of Leesburg
City Manager

Sandi Moore
Leesburg Chamber of Commerce
Executive Director

Mary Lou Mroczkowski
Catholic Charities of Central Florida, Diocese of Orlando
Volunteer

Ronald R. Neibert
City of Eustis
City Manager

James E. Neumann, Jr.
Clean Kids Backpack
President

Father Mark J. Niznik
St. Paul Parish / Clean Kids Backpack
Pastor / Founder

Lee Owen
Habitat for Humanity Lee-Sumter FL
Board Chair

Jim Polk
Businessman
Land Owner
Claudia Procko  
City of Leesburg  
Library Support Services Managers

Shay Anne Razaire  
Forward Paths Foundation  
Resource Analysis

Joe W. Shipes  
Leesburg Partnership  
Executive Vice President

Danielle Stroud  
Habitat for Humanity Lake-Sumter  
Fund Development Manager

Timothy I. Sullivan  
Lake County Commissioners  
County Commissioner, District 1

Ken Thomas, MPA  
City of Leesburg  
Director of Housing & Economic Development

B.E. Thompson  
LifeStream Behavioral Center / Mid Florida Homeless Coalition / Florida Coalition for the Homeless  
Director of Development / President / President

Bennett Walling  
Walling Engineering and Palm Plaza  
Owner

Barbara Wheeler  
Mid Florida Homeless Coalition  
Executive Director

DRAFT - Marbut Report - Page 28
Officer Travis Whitley
Leesburg Police Department
Officer

Numerous City of Leesburg Citizens

Numerous Individuals Experiencing Homelessness Within the City of Leesburg

Several Community Group Meetings

Several Volunteers and Staffers at Different Faith-based Meetings

Tour of City Trails

Tour of Encampments and Camping Sites in Wooded Areas

Tour of Panhandling Sites

Many Others, Some of Whom Requested Anonymity
Exhibit 2 -
The Seven Guiding Principles of Homeless Transformation

The Measuring Stick
Moving from Enablement to Engagement

After visiting 237 homeless service providers in 12 states and Washington, DC, Dr. Robert Marbut established the following the Seven Guiding Principles of Homeless Transformation which he commonly found to be the best practices within communities across the USA. These Seven Guiding Principles of Homeless Transformation were used as key measuring sticks when reviewing homeless service providers in Leesburg as well as the overall service network within City of Leesburg.

1. **Move to a Culture of Transformation (versus the Old Culture of Warehousing):**

   Homeless individuals must be engaged and no longer enabled. Everybody within the service delivery system (eg general public, media, elected politicians, appointed officials, boards, staffs and volunteers of service agencies and most importantly the homeless themselves) must embrace a culture of transformation. A culture, that through the help of others, homeless individuals can transform and integrate themselves back into society. For moral and fiscal reasons, homelessness must become an unacceptable condition that is not tolerated in the USA.

2. **Co-location and Virtual E-integration of as Many Services as Possible:**

   In order to increase success, all services within a service area must be e-integrated. Virtual e-integration improves coordination of services, enhances performance, reduces “gaming” of the system, engages individuals on the margin of society and increases cost efficiencies within and between agencies. Furthermore, whenever financially possible, services should be co-located. Co-location goes beyond virtual e-integration by increasing access and availability into a shorter period of time through the reduction of wasted time in transit and minimization of mishandled referrals. Co-location also increases the supportive “human touch.”

3. **Must Have a Master Case Management System That is Customized:**

   Because there are so many different service agencies helping homeless individuals (eg government at multi-levels, non-profits and faith-based), it is critical that ONE person coordinates the services an individual receives and to do so in a customized fashion. The types of service provided is critical, but what is more important is the sequencing and frequency of customized person-centered services.
4. **Reward Positive Behavior:**

Positive behavior of individuals should be rewarded with increased responsibilities and additional privileges. Privileges such as higher quality sleeping arrangements, more privacy and elective learning opportunities should be used as rewards. It is important that these rewards be used as “tools” to approximate the “real world” in order to increase sustainable reintegration into society. Every aspect of service delivery should be rooted in preparing the individual or family to have sustained success in permanent housing.

5. **Consequences for Negative Behavior:**

Too often there are no consequences for negative behavior of individuals. Unfortunately, this sends a message that bad behavior is acceptable. Within the transformational process, it is critical to have swift and proportionate consequences.

6. **External Activities Must be Redirected or Stopped:**

External activities such as “street feeding” must be redirected to support the transformation process. In most cases, these activities are well-intended efforts by good folks; however, these activities are very enabling and often do little to engage homeless individuals.

7. **Panhandling Enables the Homeless and Must Be Stopped:**

Unearned cash is very enabling and does not engage homeless individuals in job and skills training which is needed to end homelessness. Additionally, more often than not, cash is not used for food and housing but is instead used to buy drugs and alcohol which further perpetuates the homeless cycle. Homeless individuals who are panhandling should be engaged into the transformational process. Furthermore, most panhandlers are not truly homeless but are preying on the good nature of citizens to get tax-free dollars.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Property Acquisition (land and improvements)</td>
<td>$38,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Demolition</td>
<td>$52,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Preparation (includes flood plain and ADA work)</td>
<td>$8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffers (will vary by site)</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utility Relocation (electricity, water and sewage - will vary by site)</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry Control Point</td>
<td>$45,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Storage Structure</td>
<td>$80,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Building</td>
<td>$55,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Buildings (3)</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleeping Area Pad (120' x 80')</td>
<td>$41,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Prep and Serving Area</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathroom and Shower Building (12/6)</td>
<td>$45,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingency</td>
<td>$45,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$445,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Capital start-up costs will vary by site (eg terrain, sight-lines, size, ergonomics, etc.). Once a specific site is picked, a customized capital start-up budget can be developed.

Note: DC Maudlin, Director of Public Works for the City of Leesburg, developed the base capital budget based on project scope set up by Dr. Robert Marbut.
Exhibit 4 -
Generic Annual Operations Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monitors (24/7/2)</td>
<td>209,664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janitorial and Grounds (16/7/1)</td>
<td>49,504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathroom and Cleaning Supplies</td>
<td>36,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repair and Maintenance</td>
<td>22,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td>20,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational Supplies</td>
<td>20,125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration and Volunteer Services (8/7/1)</td>
<td>58,240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Supplies</td>
<td>13,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications and Computers</td>
<td>23,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>41,812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingency</td>
<td>24,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Managers (depends on location)</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation (depends on location)</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meals/Food (depends on location)</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>520,045</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Operation costs will vary by site (e.g., added transportation, sight-lines, size, ergonomics, etc.) and interrelate with trade-offs of the capital construction budgets (e.g., more security cameras less security personnel). Once a specific site is picked, a customized operation budget can be developed.
Exhibit 5 -
Basic Evaluation of Potential CAYA Services Center Locations

Based on the research and observations to date, a 24/7 Come-as-You-Are Services Center is critically needed in order to successfully address street-level and chronic homelessness in Leesburg.

A 24/7 Come-as-You-Are Services Center sometimes called a “public safety triage and stabilization unit” or a “low-demand-shelter” should include holistic and comprehensive 24/7 programming.

It is very important to understand that homeless individuals do not “graduate” from street life back into general society if they are enabled to stay on the streets, in parks or in encampments. Likewise, homeless individuals do not graduate from street-life while being incarcerated.

The most successful and proven way to increase the rate of street graduations is for individuals to be in formal programs that provide holistic, transformational services 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Holistic and transformational means comprehensive services including master case management, behavioral health, substance abuse treatment, life skills training, job training, job placement, etc.

Based on national best practices found in dozens of other communities, the following are the criterion that was used to evaluate sites:

- In order to reduce pedestrian and bicycle traffic passing through neighborhoods, and to increase efficiencies within the overall service system, this 24/7 Come-as-You-Are Services Center ideally should be located within a short walking distance of existing programs, preferably between service agency anchors.

- In order to maximize jail diversion for individuals whose legal involvement may be a result of untreated mental illness or substance abuse disorders, the Public Safety 24/7 Come-as-You-Are Services Center should be within a short drive of the County Jail.

- In order to improve neighborhood quality of life, it is critical to have existing ergonomic natural and/or industrial buffers around the facility and/or have the ability to create buffers.

- In order to save money and ramp-up quickly, the site needs to be readily available for use (eg there needs to be a willing seller and/or the property be owned by local government).

- In order to be a good steward of taxpayers’ dollars, the cost of acquiring the land needs to be affordable.
- In order to be cost effective, the cost to build and/or renovate and/or install buildings needs to be affordable.

- In order to be cost effective, the establishment of support infrastructure and utilities needs to be affordable.

- In order not to waste taxpayers’ dollars, the facility needs to be “right sized.” We do not want to over-build a facility that has wasted space nor do we want to under-build a facility in such a way that hinders program and operational functionality.

- In order to start helping individuals, reduce fatalities and get community relief as soon as possible, the ramp-up time of a site should be short.

- Are there are any site-specific impediments that might stop or delay the “go-live” date of its operation?

The main goal is to pick the site that is in the best overall interest of Leesburg and one that promotes the operational success of the Services Center. The hope is the site selection will not get bogged down by NIMBY’ism nor political rivalries.

As is true in most public-good site location efforts anywhere in the USA, there is no “ideal” location. It is therefore important to remember the mission is to come up with the most viable location that is available, and not to endlessly pursue a hypothetical location that does not exist in the real world.

This researcher was given potential locations by realtors, advocates, service agency staffers, property owners, elected officials, government staffers and members of the general public. Some of the sites given this researcher did not have willing sellers. Additionally, this researcher drove throughout targeted areas to identify possible sites. Below are the sites that have been evaluated at a “Concept-Level” only, detailed evaluation was not part of the scope, and no environmental studies were conducted (sites are in alpha-numeric order):
400 Block North 13th Street (East Side):
Site Control: Difficult/Impossible
Site Purchase Cost: High
Capital Construction Budget: Very Low (Least Expensive Site to Build-out)
Ingress/Egress: Excellent
Buffers: Excellent
Technical Operations: Is the Best Operating Location Available
Operational Budget: Would be the Least Expensive Site to Operate
Speed of Opening: Very Fast
Notes: Overall, this is the best “technical” site . . . this site would have a very inexpensive build-out and has existing buffers . . . also, this site would be very inexpensive to operate since services could be piggy backed on Christian Care Center (eg medical, dental, case management, etc.), Catholic Charities and to lesser extent the food bank . . . the problem with this site is the land owner is unwilling sell unless all connecting parcels are purchased (5-8 parcels)

441 US Highway Generic Site (Between Airport and County Criminal Justice Complex):
Site Control: Would Need Willing Seller
Site Purchase Cost: High
Capital Construction Budget: High
Ingress/Egress: Could be Good
Buffers: Could be Good
Technical Operations: Would be Complex / But Centralized for a Joint Venture Site
Operational Budget: Very High
Speed of Opening: Slower
Notes: A generic 441 US Highway site makes imminent sense if the Come-As-You-Are Services Center was a joint venture of Eustis and other cities within the “Triangle” . . . this could be several blocks north or south of US 441 . . . this site would be more expensive to develop and more expensive to operate, but these increases could be made-up if the costs were being shared by multiple cities. This would be the best site if Leesburg was to be doing a joint venture with Eustis and other “triangle” cities.
1100 Block of County Road 468 (“Courts”):
Site Control: Easy
Site Purchase Cost: Free
Capital Construction Budget: Very High
Ingress/Egress: Very Poor and Likely Dangerous
Buffers: Very Poor
Technical Operations: Operations Would be Very Complex
Operational Budget: Very High
Speed of Opening: Fast
Notes: Even though this site is attractive on construction setup basis, the operational logistics would be very difficult and operational costs would be very high.

1400 Block of Center Street (Across the Street from Power Sub-station):
Site Control: Easy
Site Purchase Cost: Base Costs Low, but Environment Costs Likely Very High
Capital Construction Budget: Very Expensive
Ingress/Egress: Poor and Dangerous
Buffers: Good
Technical Operations: Very Good
Operational Budget: Low
Speed of Opening: Slower
Notes: The close proximity to other service program makes this site attractive . . . unfortunately, it is on the wrong side of North 14th Street (27 US Highway) which makes the ingress/egress dangerous . . . additionally, this site has a lot of wet lands that is non-developable . . . this site also would require significant independent environmental testing, and then environment mitigation that could significantly raise the start-up costs.

2300 Block of Griffin Road (“Pole Yard”):
Site Control: Very Easy
Site Purchase Cost: Free
Capital Construction Budget: High
Ingress/Egress: Excellent
Buffers: Excellent
Operational Budget: High
Speed of Opening: Fast
Notes: For a variety of reasons, this is an excellent site . . . this site would be very inexpensive and fast to set-up . . . the downside of this site is the operating costs would be high because this site would not be able piggy-back on the operations of the Christian Care Center, Catholic Charities and Food Bank on North 13th Street since it is so far away . . . Would be the likely best site if Leesburg was to be going it alone.
2600 Block of Griffin Road (“Old Tree Farm”):
Site Control: Possible
Site Purchase Cost: High
Capital Construction Budget: High
Ingress/Egress: Good
Buffers: Very Good
Technical Operations: Would be Complex
Operational Budget: High
Speed of Opening: Fast
Notes: Has the same benefits and challenges as the 2300 Block of Griffin Road site, except this parcel would be significantly more costly to acquire.

South Street Generic Site:
Site Control: Would Need Willing Seller
Site Purchase Cost: High to Very High
Capital Construction Budget: High to Very High
Ingress/Egress: Very Poor and Dangerous
Buffers: Could be Good
Technical Operations: Extremely Challenging
Operational Budget: Very High
Speed of Opening: Slower
Notes: The complexities of operation on South Street are so challenging, that the operating budget would be so high as to be prohibitive.
Exhibit 6 -
Robert G. Marbut Jr., Ph.D. Biography

Dr. Robert Marbut has worked on homeless issues for more than three decades: first as a volunteer, then as a White House staffer to President H.W. Bush, later as a San Antonio City Councilperson/Mayor-Pro-Tem and most recently as the Founding President & CEO of Haven for Hope (the most comprehensive homeless transformational center in the USA).

In 2007, frustrated by the lack of real improvement in reducing homelessness, and as part of the concept development phase for the Haven for Hope Campus, Dr. Marbut conducted a nationwide best practices study of homeless services. After personally visiting 237 homeless service facilities in 12 states and the District of Columbia, he developed *The Seven Guiding Principles of Homeless Transformation*. Since then, Dr. Marbut has visited a total of 708 operations in 21 states, plus Washington, DC and Mexico City, DF and has helped hundreds of communities and agencies to dramatically reduce homelessness.

These *Seven Guiding Principles of Transformation* are used in all aspects of his work to create holistically transformative environments in order to reduce homelessness.

Dr. Marbut was a White House Fellow to President George H.W. Bush (41, the Father) and a former chief of staff to San Antonio Mayor Henry Cisneros.

He earned a Ph.D. from The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas in International Relations (with an emphasis in international terrorism and Wahhabism), Political Behavior and American Political Institutions/Processes from the Department of Government.

He also has two Master of Arts degrees, one in Government from The University of Texas at Austin and one in Criminal Justice from the Claremont Graduate School. His Bachelor of Arts is a Full Triple Major in Economics, Political Science and Psychology (Honors Graduate) from Claremont McKenna (Men's) College.

Dr. Marbut also has completed three post-graduate fellowships, one as a White House Fellow (USA's most prestigious program for leadership and public service), one as a CORO Fellow of Public and Urban Affairs and one as a TEACH Fellow in the Kingdom of Bahrain and the State of Qatar (1 of 13 USA educators selected). He was also a member of the Secretary of Defense’s JCOC 2000 class.

**Contact Information:**

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San Antonio, TX 78256

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