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City of Duluth Communications Office

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DATE: 10/22/2020

SUBJECT: City and Community Partners Announce Warming Center Plans

BY: Kate Van Daele, Public Information Officer

City and Community Partners Announce Warming Center Plans

[Duluth, MN] The City of Duluth, in partnership with St. Louis County, CHUM, and with additional support from Loaves and Fishes, will open City Center West as the second emergency warming center location in Duluth (in addition to CHUM) for winter 2020/2021. If needed, the emergency warming center can open as soon as November 4. City Center West is located at 5830 Grand Avenue. The Duluth Transit Authority has committed to providing free transportation for those traveling to and from the warming center.

The warming center will provide a safe, welcoming, heated space where people experiencing homelessness and other people in need can stay warm during inclement weather. The Warming Center, on nights where the National Weather Service predicts that the temperature will drop to 32 degrees or below, will operate from 8:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. Activation of the warming center for any specific night will be determined by the City of Duluth and shared through CHUM staff.

In 2018, the City of Duluth through the Point in Time Count estimated that between 125-to-200 people were homeless or unsheltered at any time in Duluth. This number has increased due to economic impacts from COVID-19. These individuals are at an elevated risk of injury or death during periods of dangerously low temperatures. The main goal of the warming center is to provide a space to keep people warm and safe overnight during periods of dangerous cold.

"The City is grateful for the continued partnership between St. Louis County and CHUM to continue providing a safe location for those with nowhere to go," said Mayor Emily Larson. "This began as a pilot program two years ago and has proven to be successful. Having a warm place to go during the winter is always critical, and never more so than now during a pandemic. We are incredibly thankful to our staff, partners at St. Louis County, CHUM, and Loaves and Fishes for their great work bringing this forward for this winter."

"CHUM is grateful for the support of the City of Duluth, St. Louis County and Loaves and Fishes for this year's warming center plans," Lee Stuart, CHUM Executive Director said. "CHUM's Drop-In Center will remain open for 24 hours as we did last year, and City Center West will be another site where people can come and stay overnight for warmth. We know that permanent housing is the solution to homelessness, overcrowded shelters, encampments and warming centers, and until we can address that larger issue, we need to take every interim step (like the Warming Center) that we can."

CHUM staff will be available at the warming center to talk to guests and can provide information and referral for services as needed.

The City launched the warming center at City Center West in 2018 as a pilot program. In 2019, the Warming Center was located at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church and the Harmony Club.

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