

\$1 million proposed to help the homeless

■ Councilmen want to double number of families cared for by the county

Two County Council members have announced a \$1 million initiative to provide permanent housing and better health care for homeless

Council Notes

JANEL DAVIS

adults and families.

The announcement by Council President George L. Leventhal and Councilman Steven A. Silverman came Tuesday at the county men's shelter in Rockville. Their proposal will provide \$500,000 for rental assistance and case management staff for 50 families, double the number now helped by county's Partnership for Permanent Housing program.

The remaining \$500,000 would be used by the Mobile Medical van to double its visits to shelters, including the Rockville shelter and Shepherd's Table, and add two new stops.

If approved, money for the medical services proposal would be taken from the proposed \$5 million increase for Montgomery Cares, the county's health program for the uninsured.

The \$1 million initiative is in addition to health and human services projects included in County Executive Douglas M. Duncan's proposed budget. The full council will consider Tuesday's proposal during budget discussions this spring.

Affordable housing

Renters in buildings around Metro stations could face up to an additional \$54 in monthly rent to offset the costs of affordable units required under a proposed plan by Silverman (D-At large) of Silver Spring.

Officials from Park and Planning, consultants and council staff told Silverman and other members of the council's Planning, Housing and Economic Development Committee on Monday that other alternatives would have to be included to avoid passing along costs for affordable housing to market-rate renters.

Last year, Silverman introduced a plan to require affordable housing in new developments around Metro stations. The legislation did not provide incentives for developers in exchange for the workforce housing.



Silverman

Workforce housing is designed for two working adults who earn 80 percent and 120 percent of the region's median annual income — or between \$50,000 and \$100,000 a year. In Montgomery County, median annual income for a family of four is \$89,000, and for a two-person household it's \$71,000. That means families could afford units priced between \$180,000 and \$350,000.

"I am not prepared to support legislation or regulations that requires the shift in costs to market rate units," Silverman said Monday.

Getting the program up and running is important to Silverman, who has touted the Metro area housing plan throughout his campaign for county executive. His Democratic primary opponent, former councilman Isiah "Ike" Leggett, has called Silverman's plan unrealistic.

To make the program work, planners and staff members recommended alternatives such as adjusting the income levels and offering tax breaks to developers.

Another committee meeting on the program is scheduled for Friday.

In other action Tuesday

•**Pay raises:** The council introduced a bill to increase the salaries of the County Council, county executive, state's attorney and sheriff.

If approved, the salaries would increase each year by either a specific dollar amount or based on a percentage of current salaries. The bill is based on a recommendation by the Committee to Study Compensation.

A public hearing is scheduled for 1:30 p.m. April 18.

•**Holidays:** The council also approved legislation designating 24 Special Days of Commemoration. The bill, proposed by Leventhal (D-At large) of Takoma Park, is designed to recognize the religious, ethnic and cultural heritage of county residents. It also requires the county's chief administrative officer to notify residents about any effect on county programs and services. The list includes Christmas, as well as cultural days such as Juneteenth, which marks the day slaves in Texas finally heard they were free — well after the Emancipation Proclamation was signed.

Coming up

•**Budget hearings** are set for 1:30 p.m. April 5; and 7 p.m. April 5, 6, 17, and 18 in the Council Office Building at 100 Maryland Ave. in Rockville.

•A public hearing is set on repealing the county's controversial lending law for 7:30 p.m. April 25 in the Council Office Building.