

MicroPAD showcased at Richmond City Hall

November 14, 2017



By Mike Kinney

A MicroPAD was temporarily placed in front of Richmond City Hall on Tuesday as a showcase by city and county officials who want to use them to reduce homelessness.

The *Richmond Standard* got the opportunity to tour one of the 160-square-foot, prefabricated dwelling units that is able to be stacked up to 12 stories high, cutting down on space. The microPADs also cut design and construction time by about 30 to 40 percent, partly because they can be pre-fabricated off-site, mitigating city construction costs and limiting inefficiencies in on-site building, the company says. They are also relocatable.

Panoramic Interests has been working with the city of Richmond and Contra Costa County to find a location to build a MicroPAD development. City and county officials are eyeing a development that could provide an “affordable, scalable and livable supportive-housing option for the area’s homeless residents.”

“We have not yet found a site for it,” said Mike Thomas, director of business for Panoramic Interests. “Today’s exposition really is just to have it here and show folks that even though it’s a small space, it’s high quality, durable and very livable.”

If a site is identified and approved, the county expects to lease each housing unit for about \$1,300 per month, recouping a portion of that rate through collection of tenant rent payments and a homeless assistance grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, among other sources.

The MicroPAD proposal has received support from Richmond Mayor Tom Butt and County Supervisor John Gioia, whose offices held a joint press conference Tuesday.

“After speaking to many homeless individuals, I’ve heard them express a strong desire to move into individual housing units instead of shelters,” Gioia said in a

statement. "These innovative units will help us more effectively get individuals off the streets and into supportive housing."

Mayor Tom Butt called the proposal "a real and sustainable solution, directly benefiting our most vulnerable individuals and families."

Thomas also suggested the units could be used to house teachers and students, "frankly anybody."

The showcase came amid Homeless Awareness Month in Contra Costa County.