

Council OKs Dixon proposal for 275-bed shelter

Part of mayor's 10-year plan to end homelessness in the city

By Annie Linskey, *Baltimore Sun*, March 24, 2009

Baltimore Mayor Sheila Dixon's 10-year plan to end homelessness received a boost Monday evening when the City Council unanimously approved her proposal for a 275-bed shelter on Fallsway.

Dixon stressed that the new facility is part of a broader goal. "Our whole thrust is, how can we eliminate poverty in this city?" Dixon said.

City Councilman William H. Cole IV said the project "is giving homeless people in this city an opportunity they have never had before."

The measure garnered support from City Councilman Bernard C. "Jack" Young, who had previously been an outspoken opponent of the facility. "I can't stop it," he said. But he added that he would prefer to have smaller shelters spread throughout the city.

A recent survey found about 3,400 homeless people in the city, an increase of 12 percent over two years, said Diane Glauber, who is in charge of homeless services for the city. The increase, she said, is because of better counting and the faltering economy.

"We're seeing an increase of people who are seeking shelter service for the first time," Glauber said. "We've had people in our shelters who used to donate to shelters."

The city is lobbying for \$2 million in state funding for the project, which will be called the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Housing Resource Center. Dixon expects construction to begin in May.