By Interfaith Community Services

**INTERFAITH COMMUNITY SERVICES — SANTA FE**

# The ROCk

*The Resource and Opportunity Center*

# Community Voices, Community Solutions

*A Summary of Community Feedback from the April 9, 2026 Engagement Forum and How The ROCk Is Designed to Respond*

Prepared for the Santa Fe community, elected officials, and our partners

*Interfaith Community Services — April 2026*

# Executive Summary

Homelessness is the issue Santa Feans say matters most. It strains our families, our businesses, our first responders, and our conscience. The Resource and Opportunity Center — The ROCk — is an important part of responding to that challenge: a purpose-designed, trauma-informed facility that combines emergency shelter, day services, and on-site access to medical, behavioral health, recovery, and housing supports under one roof.

The ROCk is supported by a broad and growing coalition of Santa Fe residents, faith-based communities, business and civic leaders and elected officials. Interfaith Community Services has executed Memoranda of Understanding with five local service providers establishing their intent to maintain a regular physical presence on The ROCk's campus. An additional seventeen organizations — including business associations such as the Santa Fe Chamber of Commerce and the Santa Fe Lodgers Association, healthcare partners, and front-line outreach providers — have submitted formal Letters of Support endorsing The ROCk. This depth of partnership reflects a shared understanding in our community: homelessness affects everyone in Santa Fe, and Santa Fe needs a unified front-door response.

On April 9, 2026, ICS hosted a Community Engagement Forum at the Genoveva Chavez Community Center, drawing residents, elected officials, business owners, neighborhood leaders, service providers, and other community members. After a presentation on The ROCk's vision, design, and operating plan, attendees broke into over twenty facilitated roundtables to share their hopes, ideas, and concerns. This document summarizes the full body of that feedback and, importantly, explains how The ROCk's design, location, and operating plan have anticipated and address the concerns expressed by those who live and work in the surrounding area. We know trust is earned over time through actions, not documents. This report is one step in that process.

### What the community asked for

- A safe, well-managed campus with 24/7 staffing and clear behavior protocols
- Active street outreach so guests are inside the perimeter, not in arroyos, parks, or adjacent properties
- Wraparound services — mental health, medical, substance use treatment, case management, housing navigation — available on-site
- A meaningful day program so guests have somewhere to be during the day
- A named, accountable point of contact for neighbors and businesses — not a web form, but a person who answers
- A dedicated channel of engagement with surrounding business owners, reflecting their particular concerns
- Ongoing, transparent engagement with neighbors, elected officials from the city, the county and the state and our partners, tied to project milestones

## How The ROCk has been designed to respond

- A purpose-built, 17,800-square-foot facility on a one-acre walled site, three times the size of Pete's Place, with controlled access, perimeter cameras, enhanced street lighting on Emblem Road, and ample indoor and outdoor space designed to keep guests within our perimeter
- A Day Services Center providing meals, showers, laundry, storage, electronics charging stations, computers, pet kennels, and a place "to be," so guests are not displaced into the surrounding neighborhood during daylight hours
- A Centralized Services Hub model bringing on-site medical care, behavioral health, recovery services, and housing navigation through partners with executed MOUs
- Dedicated street outreach teams that proactively engage individuals in the surrounding area and connect them to The ROCk
- A named Neighborhood Liaison as the standing point of contact for surrounding businesses and residents, backed by a monitored non-emergency phone line and defined response protocols with the Santa Fe Police Department, the City's Alternative Response Unit, the Fire Department's Mobile Integrated Health Office and other agencies that provide street outreach and intervention services.
- A continuing community engagement program of regular forums, smaller neighbor-level gatherings, direct outreach to surrounding businesses, and milestone-linked updates to the community and elected officials

***"The ROCk is not just another shelter. It is a Services Center fully integrated into Santa Fe's response system — designed not just to provide shelter for a night, but hope for the future."***

# About the April 9, 2026 Community Engagement Forum

The Community Engagement Forum was the latest in an ongoing series of public conversations organized by Interfaith Community Services that began in late 2025 and will continue throughout the development and operation of The ROCk. The April 9 forum was specifically designed to give residents, business owners, and other community members the opportunity to engage directly with the project team, hear about The ROCk's vision and design in detail, and share their own perspectives and concerns in a structured small-group setting.

Following a project briefing, attendees broke into facilitated roundtable discussions. Each table responded to four questions:

- how The ROCk can best operate as a conscientious neighbor;
- what successful implementation would look like;
- what kinds of communication and engagement would be most helpful going forward; and
- how community members might want to participate in The ROCk's development or operation.

This summary reflects both the conversations and concerns captured at those tables and the additional written comments we received from attendees. We have aggregated feedback by topic so the community's collective voice is clearly visible. Where individual perspectives or specific suggestions add useful context, we have noted them in general terms while protecting the privacy of attendees.

# What We Heard from the Community

The feedback collected from over the roundtable discussions and the written responses that followed, reflected both genuine hopes for The ROCk and genuine concerns about its potential impact on the surrounding area. Several themes emerged with striking consistency, and we take all of them seriously.

## 1. Safety, Security, and Operational Discipline

The single most consistent theme was a desire for a well-managed, well-staffed campus where guests remain inside the perimeter and where any disruption in the surrounding area is addressed quickly and professionally. Community members called for visible, around-the-clock security; for staff trained in mental health, trauma-informed care, and de-escalation; and for clear protocols governing client behavior, including clear expectations for individuals who cannot be admitted to the emergency shelter on a given night.

Attendees particularly emphasized that responsibility for surrounding-area concerns should not fall to the Santa Fe Police Department alone. Participants preferred that the ROCk deploy its own trained personnel — including dedicated street outreach personnel — to act as a first line of response for non-emergency issues, with law enforcement reserved for true safety incidents.

## 2. A Strong Day Program That Keeps People Engaged

Community members understand intuitively that what happens during the day matters as much as what happens at night. They asked for a Day Center that is genuinely engaging — a place where guests want to stay, with meaningful activities, not simply a holding area. Several attendees specifically referenced the lessons of Pete's Place, where the absence of daytime services contributed to the spillover effects that affected Harrison Road and surrounding properties.

## 3. Wraparound Services and Real Pathways Forward

Attendees expressed a strong desire for The ROCk to be more than a shelter — a place where guests can access mental health treatment, substance use recovery, healthcare, case management, and housing navigation and employment assistance, ideally without having to travel across town. Multiple tables referenced the wraparound models that have produced strong outcomes in Houston, Finland, San Antonio, Albuquerque, and Fort Collins, and asked that Santa Fe learn from those examples. There was widespread support for restoring dignity, allowing guests to keep pets, and offering second chances within a structured framework.

## 4. A Named, Accountable Neighborhood Liaison

Across nearly every table and many of the written responses, surrounding businesses and residents asked for a single, named point of contact — someone they can call who will answer,

follow up, and be accountable for the outcome. Community members used different words for the same ask — "ombudsman," "neighborhood liaison," "point person," "someone to call who will respond." The substance is the same. This is the most consistent single recommendation to come out of the forum.

> *"If there's an issue, someone to call who will respond — immediately."* — written response from a business owner
>
> *"Have an ombudsman who serves as a contact for the surrounding business and residents — create a sense of community."* — written response

## 5. Dedicated Engagement with Surrounding Businesses

Hotel operators, auto dealerships, office park owners, the Lodgers Association, and faith-community leaders asked for a distinct business-owner engagement track that speaks to their specific concerns: customer experience, perimeter security, vandalism response, property values, and operational coordination. This is distinct from general community engagement, and we have committed to treating it as such.

## 6. Ongoing Communication and Genuine Partnership

Community members asked for monthly meetings during the project's launch phase — in-person preferred, with virtual options for accessibility — tapering as operations stabilize. They asked for email updates and newsletters with both program data and honest reporting on neighborhood impact (not cherry-picked); for visits to neighborhood association meetings; for continued one-on-one check-ins with surrounding businesses; and for transparency in the development of operating policies as well as in their results. Several attendees specifically asked for updates tied to project milestones — funding secured, permits submitted and approved, and construction phases.

A number of respondents also suggested that general forums be supplemented by smaller, neighbor-level gatherings where relationships can be built directly. We think that is a good idea.

## 7. Concerns About Location and Site Selection

Several attendees, particularly those who live or own property closest to the site, expressed reservations about the chosen location and asked whether alternative locations had been considered. Others asked for design and operational features such as gated entry, transportation provided to and from The ROCk, and active partnership with surrounding property owners. We address the site selection rationale and these specific design features in the following section — directly, and without deflection.

## 8. Interest in Partnership and Participation

Several attendees offered to support The ROCk through professional partnerships, volunteer service, or continued idea-sharing — including specific offers to provide meals, volunteer with job readiness, garden with residents, and serve on advisory structures. These offers, alongside the formal MOUs and Letters of Support that already define The ROCk's coalition, demonstrate that the impulse to help is alive and well in Santa Fe.

# How The ROCk's Design, Location, and Operating Plan Address These Concerns

The concerns raised at the April 9 forum and in the written responses that followed are not new to us — they are concerns we share, and they have shaped The ROCk's design, site selection, and operating model from the beginning. Working with national experts in trauma-informed shelter design, learning from the most successful programs in Houston, San Antonio, Albuquerque, Fort Collins, and Silicon Valley, and drawing on more than fifteen years of ICS's own front-line experience, we are designing The ROCk to anticipate and address them. The tables that follow map the community's most consistent themes to the specific design and operational features we have planned.

## Safety, Security, and Operational Discipline

| What We Heard | How The ROCk Is Designed to Respond |
|---|---|
| 24/7 on-site security and trained staff, employed by The ROCk — not reliant on SFPD. | The ROCk's operating plan provides for trauma-informed staff trained in de-escalation to be on duty around the clock. Staffing levels and roles are being designed in consultation with successful peer facilities; security personnel are part of the operating budget rather than an afterthought. |
| Controlled access to the campus, with no spillover into surrounding properties. | The one-acre site is fully walled and fenced, with controlled access only via Emblem Road. Surveillance cameras will monitor the perimeter from inside the facility, and ICS protocols will prohibit loitering or camping adjacent to the property. Enhanced street lighting will be installed along Emblem Road as part of the project. |
| Clear protocols for guests who cannot be admitted on a given night. | The ROCk is designed as a low-barrier facility with ample indoor and outdoor space within the perimeter — including a secure outdoor welcome area — to accommodate guests of varying acuity without turning them onto adjacent streets. Trauma-informed staff will engage guests and connect them with appropriate resources, and overflow protocols are being written into the operating plan. |
| Mental-health-trained personnel for de-escalation, not just security guards. | On-site behavioral health is delivered by The Life Link under a formal MOU. ICS staff will be trained in trauma-informed care and de-escalation; first-response protocols are being developed jointly with local first responders. |

| What We Heard | How The ROCk Is Designed to Respond |
|---|---|
| A clear protocol for people in the area who are not served by, or cannot enter, the ROCk. | The ROCk intends to utilize dedicated street outreach teams— internal and in partnership — to actively engage people in the surrounding area, including those in the adjacent arroyo. The objective is to redirect people into services and to intervene early when nuisance or safety issues are developing, rather than wait for them to escalate. |
| Enhanced street and perimeter lighting to improve safety in the surrounding area. | Enhanced street lighting will be installed along Emblem Road as part of the project, complementing on-site lighting designed into the building and grounds. |

## Day Programming That Keeps People Engaged

| What We Heard | How The ROCk Is Designed to Respond |
|---|---|
| A Day Center that is genuinely a 'lure' — not a holding area. | The Day Services Center will provide meals, showers, laundry, toilets, mail service, computers, charging stations, kennels for pets, secure storage, and abundant indoor and outdoor space to relax — a real place 'to be.' Programming is being designed with input from those with lived experience and from peer facilities. |
| Avoid the Pete's Place dynamic where guests were displaced into the surrounding area each morning. | The Day Center addresses this by design: guests will not be required to leave the perimeter at sunrise. The Day Center, secure outdoor welcome area, and on-site services are open during business hours to keep activity within The ROCk's walls. |

## Wraparound Services and Pathways Forward

| What We Heard | How The ROCk Is Designed to Respond |
|---|---|
| On-site mental health, substance use treatment, healthcare, and housing navigation. | The Centralized Services Hub model brings partner providers onto the campus through executed MOUs. The five MOU partners (see following page) cover medical care, behavioral healthcare, recovery services, housing and supportive services, and animal welfare — all under one roof. |
| Strong, professional case management — not just volunteers. | ICS intends to provide direct case management with a fifteen-year operating record. The ROCk's staffing model |

| What We Heard | How The ROCk Is Designed to Respond |
|---|---|
| | includes dedicated case managers and housing navigators trained in trauma informed service delivery principles, supplemented by partner providers and a structured trained volunteer program. |
| Welcome guests at all levels of acuity, with dignity and second chances. | The ROCk is designed as a low-barrier facility. The hybrid shelter configuration (congregate, semi-congregate, and non-congregate) and varied indoor/outdoor spaces allow staff to safely welcome guests with different needs. |
| Allow guests to keep their pets. | Pet kennel facilities are part of the ROCk's design, with our partner the Street Homeless Animal Project providing animal welfare support. |
| Educational and economic mobility opportunities. | The Centralized Services Hub anticipates supporting employment and economic mobility services in addition to housing navigation, with partner providers expanding the menu of available supports over time. Discussions with hospitality industry representatives have surfaced the possibility of training in food and laundry service jobs. Community members have specifically proposed job fairs on site involving Santa Fe Place mall businesses — an idea we intend to pursue. |

## Communication with Neighbors, Businesses, and the City

| What We Heard | How The ROCk Is Designed to Respond |
|---|---|
| A named, accountable Neighborhood Liaison who answers when you call. | ICS is committing to a named Neighborhood Liaison with a published phone line, email address, and posted response expectations. This person will be the standing point of contact for surrounding businesses and residents, will carry non-emergency concerns through to resolution, and will host regular check-ins with the immediate neighbors. |
| Active street outreach to address concerns in the surrounding area before they escalate. | Dedicated street outreach teams — either internal or via partnership — will be central to the operating plan. They will engage individuals in the surrounding area, redirect them to The ROCk, and serve as a first response for nuisance and non-emergency issues. |

| What We Heard | How The ROCk Is Designed to Respond |
|---|---|
| Strong collaboration with law enforcement, with police reserved for true safety issues. | We intend to develop formal collaboration protocols with SFPD and the City's Alternative Response Unit, modeled on the Gateway Center in Albuquerque. The intent is to ensure trained ROCk personnel are the first response to non-emergency issues, with law enforcement reserved for genuine public safety incidents. |
| A dedicated engagement track for surrounding business owners. | Beyond the general community engagement program, ICS intends to establish a small-format, business-owner-specific engagement track — with hotel, lodging, automotive, office, and retail stakeholders — to discuss operational concerns and build working relationships between The ROCk and its business neighbors. |

## Site Selection and Location

There will never be a 'perfect' location for a homeless services center, and we hear the concerns raised by those closest to the site. We take them seriously. But the property at 1 Emblem Road meets the criteria most important to operating successfully and being a good neighbor:

- Within walking distance of Cerrillos Road and public transportation, so guests can access jobs, healthcare appointments, and other services without depending on personal vehicles
- Close to other city amenities, including the public library and a police station
- Below grade and not prominently visible from Cerrillos Road
- Few single-family residences on Emblem Road itself
- Away from schools, crosswalks, playgrounds, and athletic fields
- Away from large concentrations of single-family or multi-family residences
- Already zoned for the intended use, with sufficient acreage to build the scale of facility envisioned

Successful homeless services facilities in Houston, San Antonio, Albuquerque, Ft. Collins, and elsewhere demonstrate the efficacy of locating such facilities in places easily accessible to the people being served. When well-managed, these facilities provide a benefit to the surrounding area, not a nuisance.

We also want to acknowledge a difficult truth that several community members raised directly: there is already an unsheltered population in this area. Individuals are camping in the arroyo south of the site, and moving along Emblem Road and through Cerrillos Road. A long-time neighbor wrote that she has been calling to report this activity for twenty years. The challenge is real today, with or without The ROCk. The ROCk is not the cause of that challenge — it is a

substantial part of the solution, and the one that finally gives Santa Fe a way to meet people in this area with services, shelter, and pathways out.

## Ongoing Communication and Engagement

| What We Heard | How The ROCk Is Designed to Respond |
|---|---|
| Monthly meetings during launch, in-person preferred, with virtual options, supplemented by smaller neighbor-level gatherings. | ICS commits to a regular cadence of community forums and neighborhood meetings during the development and launch of The ROCk, with both in-person and virtual options. Where neighbors want smaller, more informal gatherings — a coffee, a potluck, a porch-level conversation — we will host those too. |
| Newsletters, email updates, and website transparency — with honest data, not cherry-picked stories. | Regular updates will be published on the project website and through dedicated email communications. Reporting will include program metrics and honest reporting on neighborhood impact alongside client outcomes. |
| Updates tied to project milestones — funding, permitting, construction, opening. | ICS intends to issue timely milestone updates as funding is secured, permitting applications are submitted and approved, construction phases progress, and the facility approaches opening — so the community is informed step by step, not only after the fact. |
| Continued one-on-one engagement with surrounding businesses and HOAs. | ICS has met individually with many surrounding businesses and residents since November 2025 and will continue this direct engagement. |
| Transparency in the development of operating policies, not just in reporting after the fact. | The operating plan is being developed with explicit invitations for community input. The April 9 forum was part of that process, and additional opportunities for input will be provided as the plan takes shape. |

# A Broad Coalition of Community Support

The ROCk is a community solution to a community challenge — and it is supported by a coalition that reflects the breadth of Santa Fe itself. Five partner organizations have executed Memoranda of Understanding with Interfaith Community Services, formally committing to maintain a regular physical presence on The ROCk's campus. An additional seventeen organizations — including business associations, faith communities, healthcare providers, and front-line outreach groups — have submitted Letters of Support.

## Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs)

These five partners have formally committed to a regular physical presence on The ROCk's campus:

| | |
|---|---|
| **The Life Link** | **La Familia Medical Center (Healthcare for the Homeless)** |
| **Santa Fe Recovery Center** | **St. Elizabeth Shelter and Supportive Housing** |
| **Street Homeless Animal Project** | |

## Letters of Support

Seventeen additional organizations have written formal Letters of Support endorsing The ROCk:

| | |
|---|---|
| Santa Fe Chamber of Commerce | Santa Fe Lodgers Association |
| Bienvenidos Outreach | Chaplain Joe's Street Outreach |
| Esperanza Shelter | La Sala Crisis Triage Center — NM Solutions |
| Santa Fe Housing Collaborative | The Salvation Army |
| Southwest Care Center | Vital Spaces |
| The Food Depot | Consuelo's Place Homeless Shelter |
| Earthcare | New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness |
| Rise Up Santa Fe | Santa Fe Safe Haven Group |
| Youth Shelters & Family Services | Homewise |

Together, these partnerships reflect a shared understanding across business, healthcare, social services, and faith communities: homelessness is a community-wide challenge, and the response must be coordinated, professional, and grounded in evidence of what works.

***"Homelessness affects everyone in Santa Fe. The ROCk is one of the ways Santa Fe answers."***

# The Path Forward

The April 9 forum was one step in a continuing conversation. Detailed architectural and engineering work for The ROCk is now underway, and ICS is on target to submit a building permit application to the City this summer. Construction is expected to take twelve to fourteen months once a building permit is issued and the approximately sixteen million dollars in capital funding is secured. Interfaith Community Services has invested approximately 1.3 million dollars of its own resources to advance pre-development work — a measure of our confidence in this project and our commitment to Santa Fe.

Between now and opening, ICS intends to continue to refine the operating plan based on community feedback and successful best practices learned from other communities, deepen community partnerships, and engage residents and businesses through forums, smaller neighbor-level gatherings, direct outreach, milestone-linked updates, and the standing Neighborhood Liaison channel. Once The ROCk is operational, that engagement will continue — with a monitored line for non-emergency concerns, regular reporting on outcomes and neighborhood impact, and standing invitations to community meetings.

## How to Get Involved

- Visit interfaithsheltersf.org for project updates, FAQs, and information on community meetings
- Contact ICS directly to be added to a community email list, request a briefing, or invite a project representative to your neighborhood association or organization
- Volunteer your time, professional expertise, or in-kind support to The ROCk's development or future operation
- Support the capital campaign or connect ICS with potential funders, donors, or partners

## In Closing

We are grateful to every community member who came to the Geoveva Chavez Community Center on April 9 to share their hopes, ideas, and concerns — and equally grateful to those who submitted written comments and suggestions. Every note we received was read and is reflected in this document. We are grateful to the partners, donors, businesses, and faith communities whose support is making The ROCk possible. Santa Fe — the City of Holy Faith — deserves a response to homelessness that is comprehensive, integrated, collaborative, built for purpose, and focused on community well-being. Other cities have done it. So can we.

**Interfaith Community Services**

interfaithsheltersf.org

*April 2026*