



# Memorandum

**TO:** COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

**FROM:** Leslye Krutko

**SUBJECT:** SEE BELOW

**DATE:** April 10, 2009

Approved

Date

4/14/09

**COUNCIL DISTRICT:** Citywide  
**SNI:** All

**SUBJECT: UPDATE ON ACTIONS TAKEN TO PREVENT AND END  
HOMELESSNESS IN SAN JOSE**

## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Community and Economic Development Committee accept this report as an update on the Housing Department's progress towards preventing and ending homelessness in San José, including the work of Destination: Home.

## OUTCOME

This report updates the Community and Economic Development Committee and provides the opportunity to discuss the Housing Department and Destination: Home's efforts to prevent and end homelessness in San José.

## BACKGROUND

In 2007, San José Mayor Chuck Reed and Santa Clara County Supervisor Don Gage formed the Blue Ribbon Commission (BRC) to End Homelessness and Solve the Affordable Housing Crisis. The BRC included a core group of elected officials, housing advocates, service providers, community leaders, and City and County department directors charged with working together, across municipal and agency boundaries, to develop a countywide plan to end homelessness in ten years. The BRC concluded its year of study and collaboration with a series of recommendations to achieve this aim. Last year, Destination: Home, a collaboration of City, County, and community-based organizations, was formed to implement these recommendations. In addition, over the past year, the City's Housing Department has both supported and supplemented Destination: Home's work towards ending homelessness.

## ANALYSIS

Over the past year, the Executive Committee of Destination: Home, which includes high level staff from the City's Housing Department, the Office of the County Executive, the United Way, the

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Housing Authority, and the countywide Homeless Collaborative worked to raise money, educate the public, and ultimately begin the implementation of the BRC's recommendations. The Executive Committee was supported by an Implementation Team made up of staff from the Housing Department, County Supervisor Don Gage's Office, the County Office of Affordable Housing, the Hospital Council, and a fulltime program manager. In January, an Executive Director, paid for through the City's Housing Trust Fund, was added to this team. Despite the part-time nature of both the Executive Committee and the Implementation Team, over the last year Destination: Home was able to make tremendous progress, including:

- **One Stop Homelessness Prevention Centers** – One of the problems that the BRC identified was that homeless services in the county are fractionalized and difficult for unhoused residents to access. To resolve these issues, the BRC recommended the establishment of a One Stop Homelessness Prevention Center which would provide, at one location, all of the services needed by homeless and at-risk households to address their specific disabling issues and ultimately access permanent housing. Not only does this benefit the consumer, but it also helps public and private agencies coordinate their services and avoid duplication, thus saving time and money.

To ensure that clients are able to receive the specialized services that they need in an environment in which they are comfortable, last November, Destination: Home facilitated the opening of two One Stop Homelessness Prevention Centers – one at InnVision's Georgia Travis Center (GTC), for homeless families and those who are at risk of homelessness, and the second at EHC Lifebuilder's (EHC) Boccardo Reception Center for chronically homeless adults. In addition, through its linkages with an onsite medical respite center and homeless shelter, and the transporting of clients directly from the County's two cold weather shelters in north and south county locations, the One Stop Center at the Boccardo Reception Center offers a seamless provision of services from emergency to permanent housing. The One Stop Centers provide a variety of services including:

- Medical Care
  - County Social Services SSI benefit advocates
  - Employment assistance
  - Housing location
  - One-time housing subsidies
  - Light case management
  - Computer labs and classes
  - Free meals
  - Substance addiction services
  - Veteran Affairs (at the Boccardo Reception Center only)
  - Childcare (at the Georgia Travis Center only)
- **Medical Respite Facility** – The BRC found that when homeless patients are ready for discharge from a hospital or emergency room, there is often no place to send them for recovery and recuperation. Therefore, the BRC recommended the opening of a medical respite program that would provide homeless individuals who have recovered sufficiently to be discharged from a

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hospital or emergency room with a safe, clean place to recuperate while linking them to services and permanent housing. Last fall, this recommendation became reality when the 13-bed medical respite center opened at the Boccardo Reception Center. Funded through a collaborative of local hospitals, since its opening, the Respite Center has consistently been close to, or at, capacity. Also paid for through the hospitals are on-site nurses and soon to be hired intensive case managers.

- **Section 8 Voucher Set-Aside for Chronically Homeless Households** – As one of the few permanent housing options for households with little or no income, Section 8 Vouchers are a critical piece of Destination: Home's plan to end chronic homelessness. Therefore, in support of Destination: Home's efforts, the Housing Department collaborated with the Housing Authority of the County of Santa Clara to set aside 200 Section 8 Vouchers for chronically homeless households in FY 2008-2009. Working off of its waiting list, by the fall of 2009, the Housing Authority anticipates housing 200 chronically homeless residents using Section 8 Vouchers. The Housing Department is currently coordinating with the Housing Authority on setting aside additional Section 8 Vouchers and Project Based Section 8 units for chronically homeless households on an ongoing basis. Destination: Home is also working to hire intensive case managers to partner with the Vouchers to provide the chronically homeless recipients with the support they need to remain housed.
- **Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) Program** – Through a unique partnership between the City, the Housing Authority of the County of Santa Clara, and the Santa Clara County Mental Health Department, in FY 2009-2010, Destination: Home will be providing housing, matched with intensive case management services, to approximately 100 chronically homeless mentally ill households. Under this partnership, the City will use its federal HOME funds to subsidize the households' rents for up to two years (with a possible renewal of two additional years) while they obtain a more permanent source of affordable housing or the income to pay for more expensive housing. The County Mental Health Department will supplement the housing subsidies with intensive case management to ensure that the households remain housed and are able to transition into more permanent housing. Finally, the Housing Authority will administer the housing subsidies using the systems currently in place for its Section 8 Voucher program. This program will start in July, 2009.
- **Fund Raising** – In its first year of operations, Destination: Home did a remarkable job at raising funds. Both the City and County provided funding for the start-up and operational costs of the two One Stop Centers and Destination: Home general operations. In addition, over \$600,500 was raised from the US Department of Health and Human Services and the local Hospital Council for the staffing and administration of the Medical Respite Center. Finally, Applied Materials, Adobe Systems, and the Kaiser Permanente Regional Foundation are providing a combined total of \$800,000 for intensive case managers for chronically homeless households. In the coming year, Destination: Home will continue to actively seek new funding.

In addition to supporting the efforts of Destination: Home, the Housing Department has been moving forward on a number of initiatives aimed at preventing and ending homelessness, including:

- **Outreach and Engagement** – There are homeless residents who live along San José’s creeks and parks, under bridges and overpasses, and in hidden nooks and crannies. Many of these residents are hesitant to seek mainstream services and assistance due to bad experiences, distrust of government or other agencies, mental health issues, or a variety of other reasons. Getting these residents the assistance they need to become permanently housed takes ongoing proactive outreach efforts to slowly build trust. In order to build relationships with these homeless residents, this March, the Housing Department began implementation of a volunteer homeless outreach program. With the support of Housing Department staff and nonprofit service providers, during the early morning hours, volunteers visit downtown San José, Guadalupe Park, and encampments throughout the City to offer coffee and slowly build the trust and relationships that will break down the homeless residents’ barriers to seeking services.
- **Project Homeless Connect** – In 2008, the City hosted its final two Project Homeless Connect (PHC) events. These one-day events provide, in one location, homeless and at-risk clients with a myriad of services including medical and mental health assistance, housing information and referrals, dental care, legal and benefits assistance, employment opportunities, California IDs, food, haircuts, and a variety of other social services. Combined, the two events resulted in:
  - 1,500 people obtaining services
  - 40 individuals and families receiving permanent housing
  - 100 providers offering on-site services
  - 1,800 free meals eaten
  - 650 people volunteering

With the introduction of the two One Stop Centers, the Housing Department decided it would not continue sponsoring the twice-annual large PHC events. Instead, future events will be smaller and more focused on specific populations, such as families or youth, or services, such as employment. Tentatively planned events include three Project Family Connect events in partnership with the One Stop Center at the Georgia Travis Center, and a Project Youth Connect event in partnership with the Santa Clara County Office of Education and California Youth Connect.

- **Prescription Discount Card** - The Housing Department has partnered with the National League of Cities (NLC) and CVS Caremark to offer a new prescription discount program to help uninsured San José residents cope with the high cost of prescription drugs. The Prescription Discount Card program will offer savings on prescription drugs to residents who are without health insurance or another traditional benefits plan, or who have prescriptions that are not covered by their insurance. The discount card is free, and users will save an average of 20 percent off the regular retail price of their prescription at most major participating pharmacies. The program will officially begin on May 1, 2009. The discount cards will be made available at community centers, libraries, San José city hall, community based agencies, and other locations as appropriate.

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- **Housing Services Partnership** – Last year, the Housing Department published a Request for Proposals from agencies interested in administering its Housing Services Partnership (HSP) program. For the last three years, on behalf of the City, HSP has provided to homeless and at-risk San José residents, budgeting assistance, light case management, and one-time financial assistance to obtain or maintain permanent housing or a greyhound bus ticket taking them to friends or family that have offered them housing. In recognition of the difficulty that homeless and at-risk residents have in finding permanent affordable housing, many of whom have poor credit and rental histories, last year's RFP added two Housing Locator positions to the available HSP services. Last fall, EHC Lifebuilders was awarded the HSP contract, which it has been administering at both One Stop Centers. Since October of last year, 1,478 households received financial assistance through this program, including 793 homeless households who moved into permanent housing and 61 individuals who were reunified with their families with the assistance of a Greyhound bus ticket.

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**Project Hope** – Last July, the Housing Department, in coordination with the City's work2future program, began the implementation of its Project Hope employment program. This two-year program will provide job training and employment preparation to approximately 70 individuals who are homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless including, non-violent ex-offenders, victims of domestic violence, and youth emancipated from the foster care system. To date, 26 individuals have enrolled in the program including two who are already employed.

In the coming year, the City will have some exciting opportunities to increase its provision of services to end and prevent homelessness. For example, the City has received a federal appropriation of \$476,000 to be used for equipment or building rehabilitation to enhance or increase the provision medical respite services. Furthermore, as part of the federal government's stimulus package, the City is receiving over \$4.1 million in Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program funds. These funds are to be used for the provision of financial assistance and services to either prevent individuals and families from becoming homeless or help those who are experiencing homelessness to be quickly re-housed and stabilized. Staff is in the process of evaluating the funding and developing a plan for its use.

I look forward to the opportunity to discuss these activities and answer any questions you may have at the April 27th Community and Economic Development Committee meeting.

  
LESLYE KRUTKO  
Director of Housing