



Memorandum

TO: DRIVING A STRONG ECONOMY
COMMITTEE

FROM: Leslye Krutko

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: October 6, 2005

Approved

Date

COUNCIL DISTRICT: Citywide

**SUBJECT: ANNUAL REPORT DETAILING ACTIVITIES IN THE HOUSING
DEPARTMENT'S HOMELESS SERVICES PROGRAM**

RECOMMENDATION

Approve the report on the activities of the Housing Department's Homeless Services Program.

BACKGROUND

On September 9, 2003, the City Council approved the 10-Year Homeless Strategy, which lays out the City's response to homelessness, and the commitment to end chronic homelessness in ten years.

The following report highlights the major activities taken during FY 2005-2006 to implement the Strategy.

Housing Services Partnership

In January 2005, the City Council approved the selection of the Housing Services Partnership (HSP) as the homeless services provider on behalf of the City. The HSP, a coalition of EHC LifeBuilders, InnVision and Sacred Heart Community Service, was created to provide services to the homeless population and to those at risk of homelessness. This partnership has improved the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery through increased hours of service and elimination of redundancy. Services provided include: counseling, financial assistance, case management, permanent housing placement, and referrals to other agencies for additional services. This type of collaboration was the first step towards the City's goal of a centralized location for homeless services. During FY 2005-2006, the HSP assisted over 7,000 individuals and families.

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Housing Trust Fund

The City's Housing Trust Fund (HTF) was created in 2003, dependent on funds from housing bonds, Tax Credit Allocation Review application review fees, and interest from loan repayments. In Fiscal-Year 2005-2006, approximately \$4.5 million was received from these sources and deposited into the fund to meet the housing needs of the homeless population and those at risk of homelessness. In Fiscal Year 2005-2006, the HTF granted over \$1.5 million for services to the homeless including assistance for rent and security deposits, information and referral services, case management, job referrals, emergency food, and bus tokens. These services address the immediate needs of the homeless population and those at risk, with focus on enabling families and individuals to remain in safe stable housing.

Using funding from State's Proposition 46, the City of San Jose's HTF provided funding for the acquisition of the Hester Apartments, an 18-unit development affordable to extremely low-income households with special needs; and the Northrup Apartments, which will provide permanent housing to 26 extremely low-income individuals aging out of the foster care system.

Project Homeless Connect

The Housing Department sponsored two Project Homeless Connect (PHC) events during this fiscal year. Project Homeless Connect is a nationwide effort to assist the chronically homeless population by sponsoring an event that connects the homeless population to services – all under one roof. The goal is to alleviate and prevent chronic homelessness by connecting people to various social and human services that will help them achieve self-sufficiency. The events were held downtown San Jose at the Convention Center. Over 27 social service agencies set up stations, including fully staffed medical and dental vans from the Santa Clara Valley Homeless Health Program and the Gardner Family Health Network. During PHC, over 900 individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness were assisted. An estimated 500 volunteers responded to the City's call for help, including City employees and employees from major companies throughout San Jose. City employees donated over 1,000 pairs of socks and other items for gift bags for both children and adults. Many City Departments contributed to the success of these events, especially, the Code Enforcement Division of the PBCE Department, PRNS, Police, City Manager's Office, and the Mayor's Office.

Housing First Model

Homeless service agencies were invited to participate in the creation of a Housing First Pilot Committee Work Group, charged with the development of a Housing First Pilot program to distribute 25 Section 8 Housing Vouchers made available by the Housing Authority of the County of Santa Clara. These vouchers were available for chronically homeless individuals and families and were available during the City's first Project Homeless Connect. All 25 recipients of these vouchers have been successfully placed in permanent housing and are receiving supportive services to help them retain their housing.

In addition, the Housing Department negotiated with the Housing Authority to set aside 100 Section 8 Housing Vouchers per year countywide on an ongoing basis, for chronically homeless households. The number of housing vouchers set aside for the chronically homeless population will be reviewed annually and may increase after one year.

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Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) – Formerly Proposition 63

The passage of Proposition 63 (now known as the Mental Health Services Act or MHSA) in November 2004, provides the first opportunity in many years for the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to provide increased funding, personnel and other resources to support county mental health programs and monitor progress toward statewide goals for children, transition age youth, adults, older adults, and families. The Act addresses a broad continuum of prevention, early intervention, and service needs and the necessary infrastructure, technology, and training elements that will effectively support this system. The Homeless Coordinator, as a member of the Stakeholder Leadership Committee, actively participated in the creation of the Santa Clara County MHSA Plan, which was approved by the State Department of Mental Health, and will provide an additional \$13.4 million for innovative solutions to the mental health system, including housing opportunities for their clients living in the County. Funding will be distributed through the issuance of Notices of Funding Availability (NOFA) and recommendations from the Stakeholder Leadership Committee beginning in January 2007. \$2 million of these funds have been set aside for the development of permanent housing opportunities for chronically homeless people with mental health issues.

Disaster Assistance

When Hurricane Katrina hit the Louisiana and Mississippi region in August 2005 and displaced thousands of people from the affected area, many were relocated to our community. A total of 144 households came to San Jose, and 87 families permanently resettled in San Jose. The City of San Jose, in collaboration with San José State University, the Housing Authority of the County of Santa Clara, the Housing Industry Foundation, Collaborating Agencies in Disaster Relief Efforts (CADRE), EHC LifeBuilders, and the Santa Clara Valley Chapter of the Red Cross, assisted these families with their basic needs, which included housing, furniture, food, household items, and on-going case management. The Housing Department is presently providing aftercare assistance for the 50 families remaining and it is anticipated that all their needs will be met by March 2007.

Regional Collaboration

The Housing Department continued to work closely with other cities in the County, identifying common problems and regional solutions to homelessness. As a result, Housing Department staff participates in the Santa Clara County Collaborative on Affordable Housing and Homeless Issues, the Housing Action Coalition, and the Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness and Housing. The Housing Department also participates in the California Keys, a group of Cities and Counties working together to create a clear path to ending homelessness in California, and whose mission is to provide a statewide forum of local government agencies that positively impacts policy and resources related to ten-year plans to end homelessness.

The Homeless Coordinator represented the City of San Jose in the State's Policy Academy, which was charged with the development of the State's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness in California. Staff from the Housing Department has also served as faculty throughout the country to promote City programs, specifically, the PROGRESS programs, the creation of the HSP and Project Homeless Connect events.

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Current Efforts

- Increase awareness of the problem: By sponsoring Project Homeless Connect (PHC) twice a year and other events, City staff invited the community to participate in finding solutions to end homelessness.
- Greater coordination of County services and streamlining the delivery of those services: Because of the success of the City's PHC events, the Outreach Committee of the Santa Clara County Collaborative on Affordable Housing and Homeless Issues began replicating the effort throughout the County with the collaboration of many service providers.
- New funding sources: The City continues to seek funding opportunities to promote self-sufficiency programs within the homeless population and those at risk of homelessness. The City submitted an application to the Valley Transportation Authority and received approval for \$180,000 for the implementation of a three-year automobile repair program and the provision for monthly bus passes for homeless individuals and families. Funding will be available in January 2007. The City also submitted a request for an appropriation of funds in an amount of \$450,000, to the federal government for the implementation of an employment program for homeless individuals and families. If approved, funding will be available in October 2007.
- Staffing: The Housing Department is committed to the implementation of the Homeless Strategy and has proposed an increase in the current staffing levels in the Homeless Services Division. Two development specialists and a Senior Development Officer will be added to the staff in the next few weeks. The Housing Department has also added an aftercare case manager, to assist with all the Katrina Evacuees needs. The Katrina project will end in March 2007. The Department also submitted an application for four (4) VISTA volunteers to assist the Homeless Division with several projects. If approved, these volunteers will join the Department in January 2007 and will have one- to two-year contracts.

Challenges

Leadership on Homeless Issues: In coordination with the County and the United Way the Housing Department will review and consolidate the City's and County's 10-Year Plans to End Homelessness, and serve as a catalyst for establishing a Leadership Group.

Discharge Planning: Every locality is required by the federal government to develop a plan for housing people who are being discharged from institutions. The Housing Department will take the lead in researching discharge planning efforts in other communities.

Improve the Homeless Services Delivery System with the goal of getting the existing shelters to accept and implement the Housing First approach. Review the physical and financial state of all existing facilities providing emergency shelter services to come up with a new vision.

To determine the effectiveness of the homeless programs implemented over the last two years, and as required by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Housing Department will be conducting a comprehensive homeless count and survey in January 2007. The results of this count and survey will be used to inform the City's efforts to address the problem of homelessness in San Jose and as a benchmark to measure the City's progress towards ending chronic homelessness.

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Should you have any questions regarding any of these actions, please feel free to call me at 535-3851.

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Director of Housing