

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: KELLI KUYKENDALL, ACTING HOMELESS SERVICES
MANAGER
HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
SUBJECT: CONFIRMATION OF HOMELESS SERVICE PROGRAMMING
AGENDA ACTION: MOTION

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Housing and Community Services Department that the Council, by motion, confirm its direction on homeless service programming, including but not limited to: 1) participation in long-term regional planning efforts through the Sonoma County Continuum of Care to develop a system-wide Housing First approach; 2) implementation of short-term efforts including a pilot program to address the health and safety needs of known encampments and activation of a 50-bed housing-focused shelter; 3) evaluation of existing City-sponsored programs while regional planning recommendations are developed; 4) decision to fund a former County-sponsored program – Safe Parking; 5) decision to develop sanctioned encampments; and 6) other topics.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is an opportunity for the Council to confirm its direction on homeless service programming, including but not limited to 1) participation in long-term regional planning efforts through the Sonoma County Continuum of Care to develop a system-wide Housing First approach; 2) implementation of short-term efforts including a pilot program to address the health and safety needs of known encampments and activation of a 50-bed housing-focused shelter; 3) evaluation of existing City-sponsored programs while regional planning recommendations are developed; 4) decision to fund a former County-sponsored program – Safe Parking; 5) decision to develop sanctioned encampments; and 6) other topics.

BACKGROUND

Regional Planning Efforts

1. The Sonoma County Community Development Commission (Commission) is the lead agency for the Sonoma County Continuum of Care (CoC), convened in 1997 by Sonoma County's three U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) entitlement jurisdictions (County of Sonoma, City of Santa Rosa, City of Petaluma) to access CoC funding dedicated to services and

housing to end homelessness. The Sonoma County's CoC 2016 award was \$3.1 million.

2. In March 2017, the Commission issued a request for proposals (RFP) seeking a consultant with proven experience in homeless service systems development and planning to provide services related to the preparation of a homeless service system redesign for Sonoma County. Per the RFP, the Plan will 1) address significant funding losses to the homeless shelter system; 2) align publicly-funded homeless services with the requirements of SB1380, the implementation of Housing First guidelines and regulations to prevent and end homelessness in California; and 3) align Commission funding policies, and local city and private funding policies as possible, with a system-wide Housing First approach to ensure a cost-effective, client-centered strategy is in place to achieve a lasting reduction in the number of persons experiencing homelessness in Sonoma County.
3. There were four proposals received in response to the RFP. In May 2017, a rating and ranking group was convened to review the proposals, comprised of representatives from the cities of Petaluma and Santa Rosa, Community Foundation Sonoma County, and various County departments. The highest score was awarded to HomeBase/The Center for Common Concerns, a HUD technical assistance provider and public interest policy firm focused on ending homelessness that is based in San Francisco. The Commission has entered into a professional services agreement with HomeBase and work is currently underway, including interviews with the Board of Supervisors and City Council.

Homeless Encampment Cleanup Pilot Program

4. Starting in July 2017, the City will launch a pilot program to address the health, safety, and fire issues for encampment occupants and surrounding community, resulting from the encampment at Farmers Lane and Bennet Valley Road. The pilot program is intended both to assist those living in the encampment in finding secure housing and to mitigate impacts to the surrounding community. Outreach for a community meeting on July 10 is currently underway as is outreach and engagement to the occupants of the Farmers Lane Extension encampment.
5. Collaborating with the Homeless Outreach Services Team (HOST), a list of 44 encampments was identified throughout Santa Rosa. From this list, an action list of those encampments with estimated populations greater than ten was created and further analyzed and prioritized based on the following criteria: the number of individuals estimated at the site; an assessment of their vulnerability due to living outdoors; associated health, safety, and fire risks; and property ownership. Based on these factors, the Farmers Lane extension encampment was identified as the highest priority, particularly given the imminent fire risk.
6. The pilot effort includes the following components:

- Intensive outreach, engagement and notice to occupants in collaboration with the HOST. Noticing will provide occupants of the encampments with a minimum two-week period to vacate the area by offering opportunities to reconnect with family and support networks, housing, shelter and services;
 - Intervention plan with HOST following Housing First protocols to include direct placement into housing, hotel vouchers, and activation of a 50-bed housing-focused shelter;
 - Removal of accumulated trash and debris, weeds, brush and other threats to fire safety;
 - Direct involvement with the media and on-going communication plan to inform all interested parties, particularly the directly affected neighbors and businesses in proximity to the site; and
 - Active management of the area.
7. As part of the Fiscal Year 2017/2018 budget, Council approved \$250,000 re-appropriated from the \$3 million Housing Action Plan NOFA (Notice of Funding Availability from Fiscal Year 2016/2017) plus \$350,000 from unassigned General Fund Balance (Fiscal Year 2017/2018), for a total of \$600,000, to expand homeless services. On June 20, Council approved execution of the agreements for the HOST Program and the Samuel L. Jones Hall Homeless Shelter for Fiscal Year 2017/2018 and authorized the City Manager to execute amendments to these agreements to provide additional funding from the \$600,000 for the expansion of services under these programs.
8. The pilot program includes the early activation of the Winter Shelter Program at the Samuel L. Jones Hall Homeless Shelter to allow for a year-round 50-bed housing-focused shelter. Staff is working with Catholic Charities to develop a budget and scope of work for the housing-focused shelter. The preliminary budget indicates approximately \$400,000 of the \$600,000 of expansion funding is required to activate the shelter (\$530,000 less \$130,000 approved for the Winter Shelter Program as part of the Fiscal Year 2017/2018 budget). The budget includes new positions for housing locator, housing navigator, and housing stabilization case manager to facilitate exits to housing and ensure housing retention, key components of a housing-focused shelter. Funding to assist with through-put from shelter to housing, such as security deposits and rental payments, is available under the Fiscal Year 2017/2018 HOST Program agreement, including the balance of the \$125,000 allocated for rapid re-housing resources under the Fiscal Year 2016/2017 agreement.
9. A separate budget is being developed to support costs associated with site access, removal of debris, fire safety, security of the site, and on-going management, utilizing funds other than the \$600,000 expansion funding.
10. Pending the outcome of the pilot effort at the Farmers Lane Extension encampment, the program will focus on the encampments located at the 101

underpasses at 5th, 6th, and 9th Streets, also identified as a priority site through the City's assessment of encampments.

Existing Programs

11. During the June 13 budget hearing, Council expressed interest in supporting other programs with the \$600,000 expansion funding as part of its overall strategy to address homelessness in alignment with Housing First protocols. City-sponsored programs for potential consideration include Samuel L. Jones Hall Homeless Shelter, Homeless Services Center, Family Support Center, HOST, Community Homeless Assistance Program (CHAP), HCA Family Fund Program, and the Homeless Encampment Cleanup Pilot Program which includes the 50-bed housing-focused shelter.
12. The Council also expressed interest in supporting a former County-sponsored program, Safe Parking, which was recently cut to address a funding gap to the Family Support Center as a result of reductions to the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program.

PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

On June 13, 2017, as part of the Fiscal Year 2017/2018 budget, Council approved \$250,000 re-appropriated from the \$3 million Housing Action Plan NOFA (Notice of Funding Availability from Fiscal Year 2016/2017) plus \$350,000 from unassigned General Fund Balance (Fiscal Year 2017/2018), for a total of \$600,000, to expand homeless services.

ANALYSIS

This is an opportunity for the Council to confirm its direction on homeless service programming, including but not limited to 1) participation in long-term regional planning efforts through the Sonoma County Continuum of Care to develop a system-wide Housing First approach; 2) implementation of short-term efforts including a pilot program to address the health and safety needs of known encampments and activation of a 50-bed housing-focused shelter; 3) evaluation of existing City-sponsored programs while regional planning recommendations are developed; 4) decision to fund a former County-sponsored program – Safe Parking; 5) decision to develop sanctioned encampments; and 6) other topics.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no additional fiscal impact anticipated at this time beyond the \$600,000 expansion funding approved by Council as part of the Fiscal Year 201/2018 budget.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

This action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it is not a project which has a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, pursuant to CEQA Guideline section 15378.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Not applicable

NOTIFICATION

Not applicable

ATTACHMENTS

None

CONTACT

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