

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: MEGAN BASINGER, DIRECTOR
HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
SUBJECT: HOMELESSNESS SOLUTIONS STRATEGIC PLAN (2023-2027) –
YEAR TWO REPORT (2024)

AGENDA ACTION: STUDY SESSION

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Housing and Community Services Department that the Council receive a Year Two Report (2024) on the implementation of the Homelessness Solutions Strategic Plan (2023-2027).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On November 15, 2022, Council approved the Homelessness Solutions Strategic Plan (Strategic Plan) for the five-year period beginning January 2023 through December 2027. The Strategic Plan provides key strategies and actions that focus on bolstering the City's response to the homelessness crises, aligning efforts with the Sonoma County Homeless Coalition (our local County Continuum of Care) to achieve the regional goal of "Functional Zero" homelessness by 2027. A system of care achieves "Functional Zero" when a person's experience with homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring. This report highlights the City's progress toward implementing year two of the five-year Strategic Plan.

BACKGROUND

1. To operationalize the visionary Strategic Plan, staff developed a Year Two Implementation Plan (2024), attached, which prioritizes key actions into two tiers and also identifies regional initiatives. Tier one includes eight action items focused on implementing each of the Strategic Plan's three overarching strategies (summarized below); tier two items are intended to supplement tier one priorities. Staff updated the Year Two Implementation Plan (2024) regularly throughout the year and made this information available on the City's website.
2. The Strategic Plan's three overarching strategies and Year Two (2024) accomplishments are summarized below:

<p>Strategy One: Improve the Performance of the City’s Homeless Response with the Regional Homeless Response System</p> <p>2024 Key Accomplishments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implemented \$3.9 million countywide homelessness prevention pilot program (Keep People Housed (KPH) – Sonoma) with All Home, County of Sonoma, City of Petaluma, and COTS (Committee on the Shelterless); • Participated in Sonoma County Homelessness Working Group to develop regional funding tracker and resource prioritization framework; • Continued coordination of a Santa Rosa-specific by-names-list (BNL); and • Continued administration of \$2.3 million from the HOME Investment Partnerships - American Rescue Plan (HOME-ARP) program, which funds two non-profit organizations that provide supportive services.
<p>Strategy Two: Expand Service-Oriented Responses to Unsheltered Homelessness</p> <p>2024 Key Accomplishments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed interior facility improvements at the Samuel L. Jones Hall Homeless Shelter Annex to provide increased privacy for shelter residents; • Continued administration of \$3.8 million from State of California’s Encampment Resolution Funding (ERF) program to provide comprehensive services for individuals residing in encampments in the Southwest and Southeast areas of the City; • Expanded outreach services dedicated to the downtown area; and • Continued implementation of the City Encampment Team to proactively address the health, safety, and environmental concerns associated with encampments.
<p>Strategy Three: Continue and Enhance Collaboration in Regional Homelessness Solutions with Key Stakeholders</p> <p>2024 Key Accomplishments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed Year Two Implementation Plan (2024); developed Year Three Implementation Plan (2025); • Evaluated contractors’ client engagement and feedback efforts and incorporated additional reporting requirements in homeless services contracts; • Presented findings to the City Council on investments in homeless services, affordable and supportive housing (Year Two Report 2024); and • Participated in Sonoma County Homeless Coalition Racial Equity Workgroup.

ANALYSIS

1. Santa Rosa continues to make progress toward implementing its Strategic Plan through investments in homeless services and affordable housing and collaboration with regional partners through the Sonoma County Homeless Coalition. The City invests approximately \$5 million annually for homeless services plus one-time funds from local, state, and federal resources to augment its efforts. In Fiscal Year 2023/2024, 579 individuals were housed through City sponsored programs, a 52% increase over the prior fiscal year. The City also took the lead on implementing a

two-year regional homelessness prevention pilot program (KPH – Sonoma) which is expected to prevent 350-400 households from falling into homelessness.

2. These efforts are coupled with \$58.5 million from a variety of sources administered by the City and the Housing Authority of the City of Santa Rosa, increasing housing opportunities through the production of 561 affordable housing units completed in the past 24 months, 246 units that are under construction, and 131 Emergency Housing Vouchers administered by the Housing Authority, which are fully leased up.
3. Between 2022 and 2024, the first two years of the five-year Strategic Plan, homelessness decreased in Santa Rosa by 18 percent from 1,658 persons to 1,365. The most significant decrease (30 percent) occurred between 2022 and 2023 from 1,658 persons to 1,160 due in part to one-time funding available during the COVID-19 pandemic and increased resources from the State of California's Homekey program. This was followed by an 18 percent increase between 2023 and 2024 from 1,160 persons to 1,365.
4. Staff has developed a Year Three Implementation Plan (2025). Key areas include continued administration of one-time funds (ERF and HOME-ARP) to provide enhanced supportive services to persons experiencing or at-risk of homelessness; overseeing year one of KPH – Sonoma; and continuing enhanced support to disproportionately impacted neighborhoods via the City Encampment Team.
5. Since its inception in 2022, the City Encampment Team's proactive approach has successfully prevented the formation of large encampments (10 or more dwellings) which present significant health and safety risks. Currently most encampments contain fewer than five (5) dwellings. Additionally, the team has reduced the number of occupied recreation vehicles (RVs) and vehicles by 89 percent citywide (211 dwellings to 23) and the overall number of encampments by 43 percent (35 total encampments to 20).

PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

On November 15, 2022, Council approved the Strategic Plan for the five-year period beginning January 2023 through December 2027, and authorized the City Manager to make minor or non-substantive modifications to amend the Strategic Plan to ensure alignment with the Sonoma County Homeless Coalition's regional plan.

On February 13, 2024, Council received a Year One Report (2023) on the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact on the General Fund associated with this report. There may be costs associated with implementing recommendations in the Strategic Plan, which staff will identify in annual operating budgets for the Department of Housing and Community Services.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The proposed action is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15378, in that receiving a report on the Strategic Plan does not meet CEQA's definition of a “project,” because this an organizational action by the City that does not have the potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, and moreover, any future actions that result from the Strategic Plan will require its own CEQA analysis.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Not applicable

NOTIFICATION

Not applicable

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 – Year Two Implementation Plan (2024)

PRESENTER

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