



DATE: June 20, 2017

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Director of Library and Community Services

SUBJECT: Review of the 2017 Point-in-Time Count and Survey of Homeless Persons in Alameda County and Hayward.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council reviews and comments on this report.

SUMMARY

This report summarizes the findings of the 2017 Point-in-Time Count and Survey of homeless persons in Alameda County and Hayward that was conducted and led by EveryOne Home in January 2017. An executive summary of the results will be presented at tonight's meeting by EveryOne Home Executive Director, Elaine de Coligny.

BACKGROUND

EveryOne Home coalition

EveryOne Home is a coalition of all fourteen municipalities within Alameda County, founded in 2007 to regionally coordinate efforts and resources to address homelessness throughout the county. EveryOne Home was formed in response to the U.S. Department Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) national initiative to end homelessness by 2020, known simply as the Plan. The Plan was adopted in 2006 and 2007 by the County Board of Supervisors, the Councils of all municipalities within the county, and over 70 local nonprofit service providers.

Continuum of Care

The Plan envisions a system that ensures all extremely low-income residents in Alameda County have a safe, supportive, and permanent place to call home with services available to help them stay housed and improve their quality of life. This system is referred to as the Continuum of Care (CoC). HUD annually provides funding to localities that implement and maintain CoC's. Among the requirements HUD sets forth for this funding is the biennial collection of quantitative and qualitative data about sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons.

Point-In-Time count and survey

The Point-in-Time Count and Survey (PIT) is the federally required methodology to receive funding for homelessness assistance programs through the Continuums of Care. The PIT count is a biennial enumeration of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons on a single night in January.

Data was collected through a four-step process:

1. One day observation based street count (100% canvas)
2. Dedicated youth count (targeted outreach)
3. Shelter count (collected from Homeless Management Information System data)
4. Survey (sample of individuals residing on the street and in county shelters in the days following the count)

The resulting county-wide data was released to local governments on May 25, 2017 to assist in their planning and budgeting for the coming year. Additionally, several municipalities including Hayward requested data specific to homeless persons within their respective jurisdictions. The jurisdiction-specific data was released on June 9, 2017. Executive summaries of the county-wide data and Hayward-specific data are provided in Attachments II and III, respectively.

DISCUSSION

Ms. Elaine de Coligny, executive director of EveryOne Home will present the 2017 PIT count findings in more detail at tonight's work session. Ms. de Coligny also will provide more detail regarding a planned Leadership Summit of elected officials from throughout the county to take place in summer 2017.

2017 Point-In-Time count and survey - Key findings

The executive summary of the county-wide 2017 PIT count and survey data is provided in Attachment II. What follows are some key county-wide findings from the data:

- 5,629 homeless persons were counted county-wide in 2017. This represents a sharp increase since the previous 2015 count, which recorded 4,040 homeless persons county-wide. Some of this increase may be attributed to a substantive change to the methodology used in the 2017 count, namely the addition of a comprehensive street count in every census tract throughout the county.
- 69% of homeless persons are unsheltered – meaning that they dwell in tents, parks, vehicles, vacant buildings, underpasses, and other locations not intended nor fit for human habitation.
- 61% of surveyed homeless persons indicated that they have experienced more than one episode of homelessness.

- 57% of surveyed homeless persons self-reported that money issues and insufficient income are primary causes of their homelessness
- 42% of surveyed homeless persons self-reported that rent assistance might have prevented their homelessness
- 36% of surveyed homeless persons self-reported that employment assistance might have prevented their homelessness

The executive summary of the Hayward-specific 2017 PIT count and survey data is provided in Attachment III. What follows are some key Hayward-specific findings:

- Approximately 7% of the county's homeless population lives in Hayward (397 persons), the third-highest percentage by jurisdiction. Oakland has 49% of the county's homeless population (2,761 persons) and Berkeley has 17% of the county's homeless population (972 persons).
- 79% of homeless persons are unsheltered – meaning that they dwell in tents, parks, vehicles, vacant buildings, underpasses, and other locations not intended nor fit for human habitation
- 60% of surveyed homeless persons indicated that they have experienced more than one episode of homelessness
- 51% of surveyed homeless persons self-reported that money issues and insufficient income are primary causes of their homelessness
- 43% of surveyed homeless persons self-reported that rent assistance might have prevented their homelessness
- 30% of surveyed homeless persons self-reported that employment assistance might have prevented their homelessness

Comparison to local count data

In November 2015, a local independent grassroots group, the Taskforce to End Hunger and Homelessness and the CSUEB Department of Public Affairs conducted a local count of homeless persons in Hayward. The report from that count, [Facing Up to Homelessness](#), was released in October 2016. It estimated that there were between 380-422 homeless persons in Hayward in November 2015. The 2017 PIT count conducted by EveryOne Home fourteen months later reported a similar number: 397 homeless persons in Hayward in January 2017.

Regional issue – regional efforts

Homelessness is a complex regional issue, and as such, coordinated regional efforts such as those being undertaken through the Continuum of Care are essential to address homelessness in an impactful, lasting way. The regional systems of care include local governments, social services agencies, health agencies, local nonprofits and community advocates, all of which are coordinating closely together and have been engaged in core strategies to prevent and address homelessness and related crises such as hunger and housing affordability.

The EveryOne Home coalition of municipalities, combined with and reinforced by local grassroots groups such as the Taskforce to End Hunger and Homelessness, will be essential components of a county-wide reassessment of the strategies and level of resources required to address the twin crises of homelessness and housing affordability.

Other key elements of the coordinated county-wide strategy to prevent and address homelessness include technical coordination, such as the formation of a county-wide coordinated system of data entry (the county-wide Homeless Management Information system, also known as HMIS), implementation of standardized performance indicators and targets for results-based accountability across systems, and commitment of over \$580 million dollars in Measure A1 funds to the creation of affordable housing units including permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless persons.

Local efforts to address homelessness and housing affordability

The City of Hayward annually allocates approximately \$835,000 of local and federal funds to support projects and programs that address homelessness and housing issues in the Hayward community. Council has long identified homelessness and housing affordability as key issues in the community, and has supported local efforts to address these issues in conjunction with the larger regional efforts.

Major Council discussions and reviews of the City's strategies to address homelessness and housing affordability can be found in the following Council reports:

- [Update on Regional Efforts to Address Homelessness in Alameda County and Next Steps in the City of Hayward's Participation in Those Efforts](#)
- [Review and Discussion of Housing Affordability Strategies and Resources in Hayward and Alameda County](#)

The above noted Council reports are by no means the only occasions when Council and the City have taken steps to address these challenging issues; however, they provide reasonably comprehensive overviews of the City's strategies, and as such serve as helpful guides to the significant breadth and depth of the City's engagement and investment in tackling homelessness and housing affordability.

By definition, homelessness is a lack of housing. Therefore, the issue of homelessness can only be truly and completely solved through housing. Most recently, the Council established three Strategic Initiatives to set goals and implement the overarching Council Priorities of a Safe, Clean, Green and Thriving community. One of these initiatives, the [Complete Communities Strategic Initiative](#), includes several action steps to address the issue of housing affordability, and by extension homelessness, by setting clear goals for the creation of more affordable housing units in addition to alternative forms of housing such as "tiny homes," accessory dwelling units, and other permanent dwellings.

“Sanctioned” encampments

One highly visible result of the recent increases in homelessness is an increased incidence of encampments. The presence of encampments in a community viscerally increases awareness and concern from a variety of perspectives, and these concerns often lead to calls for municipalities to take some form of immediate action. In recent months, this has led some municipalities to respond to the homelessness crises in their communities by creating “sanctioned” encampments, enabled and supported by the municipality by implementing temporary sanitation and safety measures around existing outdoor encampments such as portable toilets and traffic barriers. However, it is unclear whether “sanctioned” encampments are more effective than they are detrimental to addressing homelessness. Numerous health, safety, and sanitation issues have occurred in “sanctioned” encampments in the city of Oakland in recent months, including fires, physical altercations and assaults, and multiple calls for public safety services to the encampments, in addition to quality-of-life and sanitation complaints from the surrounding neighborhoods.

There are many complicated reasons why unsheltered homeless persons inhabit outdoor encampments and other areas unfit for human habitation. Homeless persons who dwell in encampments for even short periods of time invariably face unique and difficult challenges. Housing and service interventions offered to this population frequently involve navigating steeper and more intractable barriers, and must address a wider and more complicated range of needs and issues. “Sanctioned” encampments can create and exacerbate safety, security, and well-being concerns not only for the people living in the encampment but also for neighboring residents as well as first responders and social service workers. City-sponsored encampments can perpetuate the homeless condition by making it more difficult to transition homeless persons out of encampments, which can quickly become quasi-permanent, and into permanent housing to end their homelessness. Finally, “sanctioned” encampments can divert limited, critically needed resources away from the most effective solutions: creating permanent supportive housing for homeless persons, and producing more affordable housing for low-income persons overall.

FISCAL IMPACT

The City of Hayward annually allocates approximately \$835,000 of local and federal funds to support projects and programs that address homelessness and housing issues in the Hayward community. This substantive investment in applied solutions to homelessness and housing affordability has a direct impact to the General Fund. Throughout Alameda County, tens of millions of dollars from multiple funding sources, each with varying limitations and restrictions, are committed annually at the local level by municipalities like Hayward as part of the county-wide effort to end homelessness.

A significant new resource approved by Alameda County voters in 2016 is Measure A1, the Housing Bond, which will generate more than \$500 million for the creation of new affordable housing units throughout the County, including permanent supportive housing units. A 20% portion of the bond total is designated specifically for housing the lowest-income residents who earn below 20% of the Area Median Income.

Additional sources of state and federal funding that could potentially be brought to bear to address the issues of homelessness and housing affordability will be the subject of further discussion at the planned Summer 2017 Leadership Summit of elected officials being coordinated by EveryOne Home.

NEXT STEPS

Homelessness is an extraordinarily difficult and persistent regional issue. It directly impacts thousands of Alameda County residents every day, and indirectly impacts everyone. The scope and intractability of the homelessness issue is such that no one jurisdiction can hope to address, much less solve it alone with the limited resources at hand. The importance of a coordinated county-wide effort to address this issue cannot be overstated.

The data contained in the 2017 PIT count is an essential tool to understanding the scope, trends, and causes of homelessness in our community and throughout the region. The data is the result of a coordinated regional effort which includes every jurisdiction in Alameda County in addition to the resources of the federal government which has set forth clear goals to ending homelessness in communities across the nation such as Hayward.

Every indication from the federal level down to the local level is that permanent, lasting solutions to homelessness are most effective when approached as coordinated regional efforts, and remain focused on permanent housing solutions. Only in this way can economies of scale be achieved to implement lasting solutions in response to the primary root causes of homelessness: the extraordinarily high and escalating cost of housing and an acute shortfall of critically needed affordable housing options for homeless or at-risk persons, especially permanent supportive housing that includes essential services to treat underlying human issues that often lead to and perpetuate homelessness.

For these reasons, staff recommends that the Council re-commit to the continued collaboration with EveryOne Home and other entities engaged to end homelessness in Hayward and Alameda County. Furthermore, staff recommends that Council work in cooperation with elected counterparts in other Alameda County municipalities to jointly develop and implement equitable, compassionate actions for addressing unsheltered homelessness at the Summer 2017 Leadership Summit.

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Approved by:



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