



September 15, 2020

Pamela Olsen, Foreperson
2019-20 Santa Barbara County Grand Jury
Santa Barbara Courthouse
1100 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

RE: 2019-20 Grand Jury Report: Homelessness in Santa Barbara County

CITY COUNCIL

Paula Perotte
Mayor

Kyle Richards
Mayor Pro Tempore

Roger S. Aceves
Councilmember

Stuart Kasdin
Councilmember

James Kyriaco
Councilmember

CITY MANAGER
Michelle Greene

Dear Madam Foreperson and Members of the Grand Jury,

The City of Goleta is pleased to provide the following responses to the above referenced report as requested:

Finding 1

There is a need for greater transparency, understanding and accountability of homeless related expenditures and the results.

Recommendation 1b

That the City Councils of Santa Barbara, Goleta, Santa Maria, Solvang, Buellton, Lompoc, Guadalupe, and Carpinteria publish an annual report of their homeless related expenditures and outcomes.

City of Goleta Response: Agree: Has been implemented

The City of Goleta's homelessness related expenditures and outcomes for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program are reported in an annual report for public review and approval by the City Council within the CDBG Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER). In addition, a proposed performance measure in the City's new draft Homelessness Strategic Plan (HSP) will require preparation and public release of an Annual Report that covers both expenditures and outcomes on homelessness services, projects, housing and other measures. This will include additional City of Goleta expenditures from the General Fund and other City grant funding, as well as any efforts from other partners, non-profits and the faith-

based community on projects and services undertaken in the City of Goleta over the prior year.

Finding 2

Permanent Supportive Housing for the most vulnerable homeless is lacking.

Recommendation 2

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors and the City Councils of Santa Barbara, Goleta, Santa Maria, Solvang, Buellton, Lompoc, Guadalupe, and Carpinteria develop plans and devise mechanisms for providing ways to build permanent supportive housing for our most vulnerable homeless populations.

City of Goleta Response: Agree; Will not be implemented if City of Goleta is expected to act alone

Over the past year the City of Goleta has been working on a Homelessness Strategic Plan (HSP). The draft HSP was recently presented to the newly formed City Council Homelessness Issues Standing Committee and is expected to move forward for City Council review in September 2020. Among many other things, one of the objectives articulated in the HSP is development of permanent supportive housing for the homeless. The completion of the HSP could well-position the City of Goleta to qualify and apply for grant funding that could be used toward construction of permanent supportive housing for the homeless.

As a member jurisdiction of the Santa Barbara County HOME Consortium, the City of Goleta also supports use of countywide HOME funds towards construction of permanent supportive housing when properties and opportunities become available anywhere in the county, recognizing that the need is great countywide. The City supports regional efforts and pooling of resources when appropriate to leverage other funding to support projects of this nature. The 5-year Consolidated Plan for the HOME Consortium includes construction of permanent supportive housing, as well as other types of emergency housing for the homeless as a high priority and an important goal. However, it is unrealistic to expect the City of Goleta to fund or develop new permanent supportive housing on its own. The City simply does not have the financial resources to act alone. Therefore, this recommendation will not be implemented if the City is expected to act alone. The City is dependent on the County and other regional partners to accomplish this recommendation.

Finding 3

State and federal funding that is granted to Santa Barbara County does not sufficiently support the mandate for housing the homeless.

Recommendation 3

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors and City Councils of Santa Barbara, Goleta, Santa Maria, Solvang, Buellton, Lompoc, Guadalupe, and Carpinteria identify funding mechanisms, including, but not limited to, bond issues, dedicated

taxing, a designated budgetary line item and strong philanthropic partnerships, for housing the homeless.

City of Goleta Response: Agree; Has been implemented

The City of Goleta has a designated budgetary line item entitled Support to Other Agencies, a portion of which is dedicated to homelessness services and/or projects, the selection of which is developed through an RFP process. In addition, pursuant to the City's CDBG Consolidated Plan, the City dedicates a certain amount of CDBG and Goleta City Grant funding towards efforts to support the homeless. The City also supports the practice of City HOME funding being "pooled" with the HOME funding from other jurisdictions within the HOME Consortium to leverage available funding for housing that would otherwise be insufficient to fund projects alone. Finally, the City Council did consider a possible sales tax measure this year. Prior to making a final decision, the City had two public opinion polls conducted in February 2020 and May 2020 regarding a possible sales tax measure to be placed on the November 2020 ballot. The public opinion polls ranked addressing homelessness as one of the top priorities in both polls. However, given the current economic climate and financial impacts on residents due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the City Council decided not to move forward with the ballot measure at this time, though the City supports reconsidering the measure at a later time, especially if done as a regional or countywide measure to support housing for the homeless.

Finding 4

Elected City and County leaders have not exhibited aggressive leadership in determining the availability of sites in their jurisdictions for housing the homeless.

Recommendation 4

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors, and City Councils of Santa Barbara, Goleta, Santa Maria, Solvang, Buellton, Lompoc, Guadalupe, and Carpinteria designate and facilitate building of housing for the homeless on sites within their jurisdictions.

City of Goleta Response: Disagree Wholly; Has been implemented

The City of Goleta has made an effort to establish zones where emergency shelters can locate either without a permit or only a minor Conditional Use Permit and allowances are also built into the City of Goleta's General Plan Housing Element and Land Use Regulations. Sites where emergency shelters can be located are identified within the City's Housing Element. The allowed zones were shared extensively with activists, nonprofits, and possible housing partners. In addition, City of Goleta staff regularly attends meetings regarding housing and homelessness to address the issue and need for housing on both a local and regional level. While zoning has been established and active community outreach through the City's Homelessness Strategic Plan process there is still a lack of funding opportunities and/or agencies with available funds to create housing for people experiencing homelessness. Until funding is available, even with identified sites for housing, there is no opportunity for additional units to be

established. However, the City of Goleta is an active partner willing to facilitate the creation of housing for people experiencing homelessness when an opportunity does arise. A recent example of this willingness and partnership is the approval of a letter of acknowledgement and support for the Housing Authority of the County of Santa Barbara's application for the State of California's Homekey program application.

Finding 5

A greater effort is needed to inform and include the public regarding the needs of the homeless for housing and services and how it can appropriately fit into neighborhoods.

Recommendation 5

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors, and City Councils of Santa Barbara, Goleta, Santa Maria, Solvang, Buellton, Lompoc, Guadalupe, and Carpinteria be more proactive in informing the public of the needs of the homeless for housing and services and how it can appropriately fit into neighborhoods by holding forums and conducting tours of existing facilities to educate the residents whose neighborhoods are proposed for the development of projects for the homeless.

City of Goleta Response: Disagree Partially; Has been implemented

Over the past two years alone, the City of Goleta City Council has conducted several public meetings discussing items related to the needs of the homeless. Each of these meetings provided opportunities to educate the public on the needs of the homeless and receive public input on these issues. For example, at one such meeting in September 2018, the Goleta City Council declared a [Homeless] Shelter Crisis pursuant to Government Code Section 8698.2. Efforts to inform the public have intensified over the past year as the City has embarked on its first Homelessness Strategic Plan (HSP). In addition to City Council meetings, the City sponsored an Open House on Homelessness Issues at the Goleta Valley Community Center on December 11, 2019. This event was a unique opportunity for the community to interact on a one-on-one basis with City staff and homelessness service providers, as well as provide ideas and input on homelessness in our community. Organizations participating included: Peoples' Self-Help Housing, Isla Vista Youth Projects, New Beginnings Safe Parking Program, People Assisting the Homeless (PATH), Showers of Blessing, Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office, Santa Barbara County Behavioral Wellness, Santa Barbara County Housing and Community Development, Housing Authority of Santa Barbara County, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Southern Santa Barbara County, EqualiTech, and Home for Good. Approximately 150 people attended the Open House including several current or former houseless individuals.

A second community meeting on the HSP was held on February 19, 2020, at the Goleta Valley Community Center. At this meeting, staff presented an update on the HSP process and potential goals and implementation actions to the public in attendance and received public comments. Approximately 50 people attended this meeting.

In addition to these meetings, the City developed and publicized the availability of two surveys on homelessness, one geared towards the general public and another intended

to garner feedback from the community's current or former homeless individuals. Over the two-month period the surveys were made available, the City received approximately 430 community surveys and 50 surveys from homeless individuals.

In addition to announcing these public meetings and the surveys on the City's website, the City utilized several other medium to inform the public. These included numerous press releases on upcoming meetings and topics related to homelessness, postings on the City's Facebook page, Twitter, Nextdoor and Instagram accounts, and direct email via GovDelivery. Since October 2019, the City has also published six articles on homelessness in its online magazine, the *Monarch Press*.

Despite the concerted campaign over the past year in particular related to the development of the City's Homelessness Strategic Plan (HSP), the City recognizes that more can be done. The draft HSP includes a best practices section titled "Public Education, Information and Outreach" and also includes an objective to "Develop a public education campaign on homelessness." The City recognizes the importance of educating and engaging the public with regard to homelessness, especially when it comes to development of housing for the homeless.

Finding 8

All overnight emergency shelters are at capacity year-round, there are not enough day centers, and there are currently no Navigation Centers in Santa Barbara County.

Recommendation 8a

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors and the City Councils of Santa Barbara, Goleta, Santa Maria, Solvang, Buellton, Lompoc, Guadalupe, and Carpinteria work together to create overnight emergency shelters commensurate with their homeless populations.

City of Goleta Response: Agree; Will not be implemented [according to a schedule]

The City of Goleta agrees more shelter capacity and additional day centers and navigation centers are needed to serve the homeless population in Santa Barbara County. There is currently no emergency shelter in the City of Goleta, Isla Vista or surrounding unincorporated Goleta Valley. There are logistical challenges and territorial issues, among other things, that make the lack of local shelter a hindrance to sheltering individuals in Goleta. During the City's development of its first Homelessness Strategic Plan (HSP) over the past year, the City developed and publicized the availability of two surveys on homelessness, one of which was geared towards homeless individuals. City staff and its homeless outreach partners interviewed dozens of unsheltered homeless individuals in the Goleta/Isla Vista area. In total, 50 of these interviews/surveys were conducted. One of the questions on the survey was whether they would be willing to stay in an emergency shelter and if not, why. 72.5% of respondents said "no" and the reasons given included liking/wanting to have their own space, not liking the dormitory-style living arrangements, lack of storage, no allowance for pets, and too many rules, among others. Conversely, 74% said they would use a day center.

The 2020 Point-in-time Count revealed 53 homeless individuals are living on the streets in the City of Goleta. Based on the survey, only 14-15 people living on the streets would be interested in going into a congregate, dormitory-style shelter. Furthermore, for the past several years the City has contracted with either Salvation Army or PATH for reservation of two beds for homeless individuals from Goleta. Despite numerous on-going efforts by City outreach staff (Community Resource Deputy) and those of the City's outreach partners at County Behavioral Wellness, Home for Good, and the faith-based community, only one of the beds at PATH (City's current contract) has been occupied so far (for approximately two months in Spring 2020).

The City's draft HSP does include discussions on Day Centers and Emergency Shelters/Navigation Centers and included within the HSP are objectives to establish both in the Goleta area. However, given the relatively small number of overall unsheltered homeless in the City of Goleta, and even smaller number willing to go into a shelter, the City would be more supportive of a regional emergency shelter and day center serving the City of Goleta, Isla Vista and unincorporated Goleta Valley. In addition, due to the City's limited financial resources, the City anticipates working with the County of Santa Barbara, the Continuum of Care and other partners to accomplish these objectives. The City cannot accomplish this objective alone, and therefore cannot commit to implement this recommendation on any particular implementation schedule.

Recommendation 8b

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors and the City Councils of Santa Barbara, Goleta, Santa Maria, Solvang, Buellton, Lompoc, Guadalupe, and Carpinteria work together to create day centers commensurate with their homeless populations.

City of Goleta Response: Agree; Will not be implemented [according to a schedule]

The City of Goleta agrees that there is a regional need for day center services throughout Santa Barbara and the cities located within it. City of Goleta staff have met with leaders from the day center operating prior to the COVID-19 pandemic in Santa Barbara. Staff toured the facility in order to learn more about the best practices. In addition, City staff conducted a survey of people experiencing homelessness in and around Goleta and found services provided at a day center to be one of their most requested.

To address this need, the City of Goleta has included establishment of a day center as an objective in or near Goleta in the City's draft Homelessness Strategic Plan (HSP). The challenges to implementing this type of program include securing ongoing funding for center operations and an available space situated in an ideal location. This will require partnerships with local non-profits or other regional partners to accomplish. Although this is an objective of the HSP, the City of Goleta cannot commit to implementing this recommendation on a particular schedule.

Recommendation 8c

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors and the City Councils of Santa Barbara, Goleta, Santa Maria, Solvang, Buellton, Lompoc, Guadalupe, and Carpinteria fund and expedite the development and opening of more shelters incorporating the Navigation Center concept.

City of Goleta Response: Disagree Partially; Will not be implemented

The City of Goleta does agree that the Navigation Center concept is essential for the success of shelters and the successful transition from shelter to housing for people experiencing homelessness. The work in the City of Goleta's Homelessness Strategic Plan notes this and highlights the importance of providing comprehensive wrap-around services whenever providing services to the homeless population.

However, the City of Goleta does not feel that a congregate emergency shelter is appropriate for each jurisdiction. After extensive outreach to both service providers and the homeless population in and around Goleta, requests for shelter spaces was extremely low, even nonexistent. Supporting this finding, the City of Goleta has paid for two spaces dedicated to Goleta homeless at first the Salvation Army location in Santa Barbara and currently at People Assisting the Homeless (PATH) and the dedicated beds have gone empty except for one period of time in spring of 2020. This is not due to a lack of outreach or effort to support people experiencing homeless with these shelter beds. Outreach partners from Home for Good and County of Santa Barbara Behavioral Wellness offer this shelter space to Goleta homeless, in addition to the City of Goleta's Community Resource Deputy offering the shelter when interacting with homeless individuals in Goleta.

There was, though, great support for supportive housing and the navigation center concept is essential to both interim and supportive housing. The City of Goleta supports this model and wrote a letter of support for an application to provide a navigation center, interim, and permanent supportive housing in August 2020. Through extensive outreach and best practice research, the City of Goleta believes that an emergency warming center and non-congregate shelter is most appropriate for the Goleta jurisdiction. However, developing and operating such a shelter would require funding assistance and partnership with the County, local non-profits and/or other regional partners. For these reasons, the City of Goleta cannot commit to a particular implementation schedule to accomplish this recommendation.

Finding 9

Currently, several California cities are providing temporary homeless facilities by utilizing alternative cost-effective forms of housing such as high-performance tension fabric structures, tiny houses, and modular housing.

Recommendation 9

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors and the City Councils of Santa Barbara, Goleta, Santa Maria, Solvang, Buellton, Lompoc, Guadalupe, and Carpinteria undertake feasibility studies and develop plans for using alternate types of cost-effective forms of housing.

City of Goleta Response: Disagree Partially; Will not be implemented if City of Goleta is expected to act alone

The City of Goleta disagrees partially with this finding due to the lack of funding and staff resources to undertake a feasibility study. The City's homelessness efforts' project managers do support various types of alternative, cost-effective housing, as does the City of Goleta Planning and Environmental Review Department. It is important to note, however, that any such alternative construction methods must demonstrate meeting Building Code requirements. The City does not have the funding or resources to evaluate the feasibility of alternative building techniques itself. Approval of such alternative methods should happen at the State level with revisions, as necessary, to the California Building Code. Once safety is verified, City of Goleta staff would support this type of housing being utilized as appropriate in Goleta.

For the staffing and funding reasons noted, the City of Goleta will not be able to implement a feasibility study if expected to undertake the feasibility study independent of a regional or statewide approach.

Finding 10

Currently, in some California cities, large health care insurers are utilizing their tax credits to fund housing facilities for the chronically homeless.

Recommendation 10

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors and City Councils of Santa Barbara, Goleta, Santa Maria, Solvang, Buellton, Lompoc, Guadalupe, and Carpinteria contact major health care insurers in their jurisdictions and encourage them to seek partnerships to support the construction of housing for the chronically homeless of Santa Barbara County.

City of Goleta Response: Disagree Partially: Will not be implemented if City of Goleta is expected to act alone

The City of Goleta disagrees partially with the approach of recommending that the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors and city councils throughout Santa Barbara County contact government insurers directly. While the intent is valid, the approach is not one that the City of Goleta feels would be effective or efficient for staff of each jurisdiction.

Acknowledging the staffing and financial impact that people experiencing homelessness have on the medical system is valid. Yet, recommending individual agencies to contact federal insurers individually seems duplicative and ineffective. Coming together as a unified local government group with one research- and data-backed message would likely be more effective. This regional approach would also prevent staff duplication of efforts.

In addition, it is likely that local medical care providers, such as the Cottage Hospital system, who are required to provide medical care to individuals in need of care regardless of financial ability to pay, would also have a vested interest and should be engaged in these discussions. The hospital system may also have established relationships with local jurisdictions making initial discussions more effective.

A regional, comprehensive approach to involve federal medical insurers and local hospitals in partnership with the County of Santa Barbara and cities is an approach the City of Goleta supports and would actively participate in. For these reasons, the City of Goleta will not be implementing this recommendation as a singular entity but would support regional efforts to do so.

The City of Goleta shares the Grand Jury's concern over the number of people experiencing homelessness in Santa Barbara County. For the past year and a half, the City of Goleta has been working diligently with the community, the Sheriff's Office, the County of Santa Barbara, area homeless service providers and others to develop the City's first Homelessness Strategic Plan (HSP). In doing so, the City has worked cooperatively and proactively address many of the findings and recommendations of the Grand Jury's report. More will be done in the coming months and years as the City begins to implement the plan to address needs and gaps identified in the HSP. However, it must be recognized that homelessness is not limited to jurisdictional boundaries. It is a regional issue that must be addressed as such.

This concludes our responses to the Grand Jury's Report. For any additional assistance we can provide on this, please feel free to contact Vyto Adomaitis, Director of Neighborhood Services & Public Safety at vadomaitis@cityofgoleta.org or by phone at 805-961-7555.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:



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Michelle Greene
City Manager

CC: Vyto Adomaitis, Director, NS & Public Safety Dept.
Charlie Ebeling, Director, Public Works Dept.

The Honorable Michael J. Carrozzo, Presiding Judge
Santa Barbara Superior Court
1100 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Santa Barbara County Grand Jury
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