



City of Buellton

September 25, 2020

Ms. Pamela Olsen, Foreperson
Santa Barbara County Grand Jury
Santa Barbara Courthouse
1100 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Re: Response to Grand Jury Report: Homeless in Santa Barbara County: Our Everyday Epidemic

Dear Ms. Olsen and Members of the Grand Jury:

Per the request of the Grand Jury, the City of Buellton presents the following responses to the report regarding Homelessness. We appreciate the opportunity to respond to your inquiry and to convey the City's acknowledgement of the serious nature of this topic in our region as well as across the state and nation.

Finding 1 - There is a need for greater transparency, understanding and accountability of homeless related expenditures and the results.

- Agree

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.

- Requires further analysis, with analysis completion date of no more than six months after the issuance of the report: The County of Santa Barbara has offered to provide a template for such a report. A similar effort occurred last year when information regarding homeless related expenditures was provided by Buellton and other cities to the City through the City Working Group on Housing and Homelessness. It is feasible for Buellton to provide this information to the County again to compile such a report to be available to the public, but further analysis is needed in the form of further collaboration with the County and Cities.

Finding 2 - Permanent Supportive Housing for the most vulnerable homeless is lacking

- Agree

***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.*

- Has been implemented, with brief summary of implementation actions taken: Buellton's Municipal Code allows shared living arrangements, including permanent supportive housing, by-right in all zones permitting residential uses. Further, the City is currently undertaking a survey in coordination with an affordable housing developer geared toward providing housing and supportive services for those at-risk for homelessness living in the single room occupancy motels along Avenue of Flags.

***Finding 3** - State and federal funding that is granted to Santa Barbara County does not sufficiently support the mandate for housing the homeless.*

- Disagree partially with an explanation: Over the last few years, state and federal funding available for housing the homeless has increased. The responsibility to seek out and apply for these funding sources, however, lies with developers. These funding programs are often riddled with complex criteria that require a high level of proficiency in what is a niche market. In the County, the need for housing for homeless persons is much greater than what the small number of capable development agencies can provide.

***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.*

- Will not be implemented, with an explanation of why: At this time, local funding mechanisms are unlikely to be supported or feasible. The City's small size, budget, and small and generally transitory homeless population would not warrant the resources needed to provide additional local funding. Alternatively, the City offers affordable housing developers in-lieu funds from our growing Inclusionary Housing Fund and supports developers in pursuing state and other funding whenever possible.

***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.*

- Disagree partially with an explanation: The availability of sites is determined by the Housing Element of a jurisdiction's General Plan, which in Buellton is updated every 8 years. In Buellton, housing for homeless persons is allowed by conditional use permit in all zone districts, with the caveat that a project cannot be denied nor any condition be imposed on the project with regard to population segments stipulated in fair housing statutes (e.g., individuals with Alzheimer's, AIDS/HIV, and homeless). City Council and Planning Commission members have supported policies such as this in previous Housing Elements. However, there are limitations to the availability of sites, in large part due to the restrictions associated with a voter-initiated Urban Growth Boundary. Nevertheless, available sites have been identified to meet the RHNA requirements, and Buellton will continue to strive to identify such sites.

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.

- Has been implemented, with brief summary of implementation actions taken: The Buellton Municipal Code allows the following: special needs housing in all zones with a Conditional Use Permit (CUP), which includes single room occupancy units, congregate care facilities, and similar types of special living arrangements for persons and families who possess extraordinary housing needs by reason of economic, social, mental or physical disability; emergency shelters are allowed by-right in the General Commercial zone and with a CUP in the Residential Multi-Family, Service Commercial and Industrial zones; shared living arrangements, including supportive housing, allowed by-right in all residential zones and; transitional housing allowed by-right in the Residential Single-Family and Residential Multi-Family zones. The City facilitates the discretionary approval process by stipulating per the Buellton Municipal Code that no project shall be denied nor shall any condition be imposed on a project over which the city has discretionary approval with regard to familial status, disability or other population segment stipulated in fair housing statutes (e.g., individuals with Alzheimer's, AIDS/HIV, and homeless).

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.

- Agree

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

- Will be implemented, with an implementation schedule: With the small staff in Buellton, the City is reliant on developers of affordable housing projects to conduct outreach and gain community support as projects come. In a given year however, the City does not typically see any development projects submitted for housing or services to the homeless due to the small and transitory population of homeless in Buellton, and there are no existing facilities in Buellton for the housing of homeless persons. If and when housing or service projects for homeless persons are proposed in the City, staff will be proactive in coordinating outreach efforts with the developer.

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.

- Agree

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.

- Will not be implemented, with an explanation of why: The City's small size, budget, and small and generally transitory homeless population would not justify the expenditure of resources needed to provide an overnight emergency shelter in Buellton.

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.

- Will not be implemented, with an explanation of why: The City's small size, budget, and small and generally transitory homeless population would not justify the expenditure of resources needed to provide a day center in Buellton.

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.

- Agree

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.

- Will be implemented, with an implementation schedule: The City has applied for grant funding from HCD to develop stock plans for detached ADUs, which is a cost-effective form of housing. The City will also look at programs such as feasibility studies and developing policies and plans for allowing alternative types of cost-effective forms of housing as part of the next update to our Housing Element in 2023.

***Finding 10** - Currently, in some California cities, large health care insurers are utilizing their tax credits to fund housing facilities for the chronically homeless.*

- Agree

***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.*

- Will not be implemented, with an explanation of why: There are no major health care providers in the city of Buellton.

The City of Buellton hopes that you have found these responses both sufficient and useful. Should additional information be required, please feel free to contact me directly.

Respectfully Submitted,



Scott Wolfe, AICP
City Manager

Cc: Judge Michael J. Carrozzo