

CITY of CARPINTERIA, CALIFORNIA



September 14, 2020

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

Transmitted digitally to Santa Barbara Grand Jury, sbcgrandjury@sbcgj.org

Re: Response to the Grand Jury Report: Homelessness In Santa Barbara County, Our Everyday Epidemic

Honorable Foreperson Olsen,

Thank you for illuminating the important issues and recommendations included in the Grand Jury's Report. Please know that the City of Carpinteria is committed to preventing homelessness and addressing the needs of people experiencing homelessness in Carpinteria.

The following is the City's response to the Findings and Recommendations included in the Report.

Finding 1

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

The City disagrees partially with the finding. At public meetings held for consideration of the budget and receiving an annual report on homeless services, the City Council receives information on expenses associated with delivery of homeless services by the City.

Finding 1 seems to be based on paragraph 3, page 14, of the Grand Jury's Report that addresses the County Continuum of Care's (CoC) decision-making and distribution of federal funding for various homeless services and housing. The City agrees that the Carpinteria community is often not aware how federal monies dedicated to addressing homelessness in Santa Barbara County are being spent, the homeless services programs that the funding supports, and what services are provided in the City of Carpinteria based on that federal funding and the allocation decisions of the CoC.

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.

This Recommendation will be implemented. The City of Carpinteria City Council receives an annual report on Homeless Services. The Annual Report includes information on expenses and outcomes; however, this information can be improved upon. The City will seek to provide more detailed information on local expenses and outcomes in the delivery of homeless services in the City, including improving coordination with the County in order to incorporate local data from regional programs into the Report.

Finding 2

Permanent Supportive Housing for the most vulnerable homeless is lacking.

The City agrees with the finding.

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.

The Recommendation will be implemented. The City of Carpinteria's plan for encouraging the development of housing for special needs populations, such as people experiencing homelessness, is a part of its Housing Element that, in part, identifies sites and means to eliminate government constraints to building housing that can meet local needs. The City's Housing Element has been approved by the State Department of Housing and Community Development for a planning period of 2015-2023. The City is on track to meet the quantifiable objectives of the Housing Element <https://carpinteria.ca.us/city-hall/community-development/housing/>.

The City does not build housing, i.e., it does not operate a housing authority or other similar agency with the authority and resources to build housing. Affordable housing is built through the application of inclusionary housing requirements as a part of private development permitting or through partnerships with builders of affordable housing such as the Santa Barbara County Housing Authority or Peoples Self-Help Housing Corporation. This approach has been successful in the past. Most recently, the City has been working with the County Housing Authority to identify a site in the City for housing development that could include units appropriate for meeting some of the housing need related to people that are homeless in Carpinteria.

The City is a part of a regional effort being led by the County to address homelessness in Santa Barbara County. The Elected Leaders Forum to Address Homelessness has received a report on the County's Phase I Regional Action Plan to Address Homelessness and will soon receive a report on Phase II. The work has resulted in a quantification of the different shelter and housing types required to be established to meet Santa Barbara County's homeless population needs and includes as a key goal to increase the housing inventory in the county (units and beds) dedicated to homelessness and affordability. It is expected that the County will work with Carpinteria and other local jurisdictions to identify appropriate housing sites and collaborate on development.

Finding 3

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

The City agrees with the finding.

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. In order to build affordable housing, including beds and housing for the homeless population, in small communities such as Carpinteria, State and federal funding is required. It is not possible for a community the size of Carpinteria to fund the development and operation of housing to meet the needs of its homeless population without robust state and federal assistance. Currently, state and federal revenues come to the Santa Barbara County CoC for decision-making for allocation to projects, programs and services that address homeless needs. The amount of state and federal support is inadequate to meet regional needs.

In the context of the Report (Page 15, paragraph 1), the City interprets this recommendation to mean that the City of Carpinteria should allocate discretionary funding and/or develop new revenue dedicated to development of housing for meeting the needs of people experiencing homelessness. As discussed in response to Recommendation 2, the City is not a housing builder nor does it have access to federal or state housing funds. The City will continue to collaborate at the regional level with the County and non-profit housing developers/operators in order to meet local needs. In the past this has included providing local matches to build affordable housing.

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.

The City disagrees with the finding.

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.

The recommendation has been implemented. As described in the response to Recommendation 1, the City's Housing Element has identified sites for affordable housing.

Additionally, the City has worked with the County Housing Authority, Peoples Self-Help Housing, and Home for Good, to identify possible sites for affordable housing, including housing for meeting the needs of people that are experiencing homelessness. These efforts were successful in connecting the Housing Authority with a site in Carpinteria that it is now exploring acquisition and development.

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.

The City agrees with the finding.

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.

The City has implemented this recommendation. The type of effort described is required for any development in Carpinteria and, in particular, affordable housing projects or shelters. This type of education and outreach work may be conducted independent of a specific proposal; however, it is much more effective when evaluating sites for development and/or at the outset of the development review process. For the City, this type of work is conducted as a part of Housing Element update cycles and through the development review and permitting process.

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.

The City disagrees partially with this finding. The City does not have shelter occupancy information and therefore cannot verify or dispute specific daily or annual overnight emergency sheltering capacity; however, the City agrees with the more general conclusion of the finding that there is not enough sheltering and assistance program capacity in the County to meet needs.

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.

This recommendation will not be implemented. As described in responses to previous recommendations of the Report, the City does not have access to resources sufficient to

address this recommendation. The City is committed to continuing to work with the County to address homelessness in the County via a housing first approach.

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.

This recommendation will not be implemented. As described in responses to previous recommendations of the Report, the City does not have access to resources sufficient to address this recommendation. The City is committed to continuing to work with the County to address homelessness via a housing first approach, including pursuing the establishment of facilities operated under the Day Center model, should that be determined appropriate for the region.

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.

This recommendation will not be implemented. As described in responses to previous recommendations of the Report, the City does not have access to resources sufficient to address this recommendation. The City is committed to continuing to work with the County to address homelessness via a housing first approach, including pursuing the establishment of facilities operated under the Navigation Center model, should that be determined appropriate for the region.

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.

The City agrees with the finding. The City of Carpinteria is aware of such alternative forms of housing and has participated in discussions about this housing type through the Santa Barbara Cities/County Joint Affordable Housing Task Group.

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.

This recommendation will not be implemented. As described in responses to previous recommendations of the Report, the City does not have access to resources sufficient to address this recommendation. The City is committed to continuing to work with the County to

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address homelessness via a housing first approach, including pursuing the establishment of temporary housing types, should that be determined appropriate for the region, and consistent with applicable building codes.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Report.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wade T. Nomura", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Wade T. Nomura
Mayor

Cc: The Honorable Judge Michael J. Carrozzo