



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

Honorable Foreperson Olsen,

Thank you for the research on this important issue to our communities and the Grand Jury findings and recommendations.

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

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding 1

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

Response: 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.

Response: The City will include any funding toward homelessness issues in it's future budgets starting with Fiscal Year 2021-22.

Finding 2

Permanent Supportive Housing for the most vulnerable homeless is lacking.

Response: 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.

Response: Requires further analysis. The City is open to working with the County and other city jurisdictions to make plans and devise mechanisms for providing ways to build permanent supportive housing. The City will complete the analysis by March 14, 2021.

Finding 3

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

Response: Agree

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.

Response: Requires further analysis. The City is open to working with the County and other city jurisdictions to analyze this recommendation. The City will complete the analysis by March 14, 2021.

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.

Response: Disagree partially. More information is needed.

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.

Response: Will not be implemented. The City of Solvang has minimal homeless population and will focus instead on production of housing and affordable housing to meet State requirements and ensure the City's homelessness does not increase.

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.

Response: Disagree partially. The jurisdictions do have communication channels about available resources and homeless needs.

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.

Response: Will not be implemented. The City has minimal homeless population. Alternative to the suggested methods, the City will post available homeless resources on City website to inform those in need.

Finding 6

There are no elected leaders serving as voting members of the Santa Barbara County Continuum of Care Board.

Recommendation 6

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors direct the Community Services Department to work with the Continuum of Care Board to develop a procedure for including elected leaders as voting members of the Continuum of Care Board.

Finding 7

A conflict of interest exists within the membership of the Continuum of Care Board as the member organizations who seek funding for their projects are permitted to vote and grant funding for their own projects.

Recommendation 7

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors direct the Community Services Department and the Santa Barbara County Counsel to work with the Continuum of Care Board to change the

procedures for the voting process on the Continuum of Care Board to eliminate the perceived conflict of interest.

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.

Response: Disagree partially. Need more analysis by location.

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.

Response: Will be implemented by June 30, 2021. The City is open to working with the jurisdictions in collaboration to create overnight emergency shelters.

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.

Response: Will be implemented by June 30, 2021. The City is open to working with the jurisdictions in collaboration to create day centers.

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.

Response: Will be implemented by June 30, 2021. The City is open to working with the jurisdictions in collaboration to create more shelters incorporating the Navigation Center concept.

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.

Response: Partially disagree. Need more information on effectiveness of these programs.

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.

Response: Will not be implemented. The City will need more information on effectiveness of these programs before undertaking a feasibility study.

Finding 10

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

Response: Disagree partially. Need more information.

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.

Response: Will be implemented by June 30, 2021.

Finding 11

Housing First's wraparound services concept necessitates an increased staff-to-client ratio.

Recommendation 11

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors provide the Behavioral Wellness Department with additional continuous funding to ensure the needed staff-to-client ratios in the County supportive housing facilities.