



February 2, 2022

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Pamela Olsen, Foreperson
2021 Santa Barbara County Grand Jury
Santa Barbara County Courthouse
1100 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

RE: 2021 Santa Barbara County Grand Jury Report: The Keys to Housing the Homeless

Dear Madame 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 in the November 19, 2021, letter to the City:

Finding 1

During the COVID-19 pandemic Project Roomkey demonstrated the value of providing rooms, with appropriate services, for the vulnerable elderly homeless with underlying health conditions.

Recommendation 1

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors and all city councils within the County establish programs similar to Roomkey in both North and South County to continue to provide rooms, with appropriate services, for vulnerable elderly homeless with underlying health conditions.

City of Goleta Response: Agree: Has been implemented

On August 17, 2021, the City Council authorized the expenditure of \$530,565 in a contract with CityNet, a statewide nonprofit homeless service provider, to provide services similar to those outlined in Project Roomkey.

Specifically, the project provides:

- **Outreach and Engagement** – Two staff will contact homeless people living in encampments or other areas not fit for human habitation three times per week. People will be assessed, provided food, water, and

sanitation products, and invited to participate in the homelessness Coordinated Entry System.

- **Housing Navigation** – CityNet staff will offer homeless people immediate shelter in either a local motel room, the newly opened Hedges House of Hope in Isla Vista, or one of the two Goleta beds at the PATH Shelter. At the same time, efforts will be made to secure permanent affordable housing through rental assistance or permanent supportive housing options. This effort involves the rental of 5 motel rooms for the duration of the agreement for use to provide “bridge housing” while more permanent housing is arranged.
- **Case Management** – Each homeless person will be enrolled in a collaborative case management process that will track and guide people into transitional and/or permanent housing with ongoing supportive services like crisis management, motivational interviewing for lifestyle changes, access to physical and behavioral healthcare providers, financial assistance and food assistance and other supports.

Finding 2

Few hotels and motels throughout Santa Barbara County were willing to participate in Project Roomkey.

Recommendation 2

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors instruct the Santa Barbara County Community Services Department to form an alliance with all city councils within the County to develop a roster of hotels and motels willing to participate in a Roomkey-type program.

City of Goleta Response: Agree: Has been implemented

The City of Goleta has contracted with the non-profit, CityNet, for finding, negotiating and securing hotels in the greater Goleta region. As the Grand Jury found, this process has proven to be very challenging. Most hotel providers have no interest in participating in this program. Additionally, in November of 2021, two residents placed in a local motel in the City of Goleta caused disturbances and damage to the property. The initial response from the motel’s management was to terminate the relationship with CityNet. Through negotiations with the manager, CityNet has been able to restore this relationship.

Currently, only one motel in the City of Goleta has agreed to participate in this RoomKey style effort. CityNet, working on behalf of the City of Goleta, will continue to look for other motel and hotel providers.

Finding 3

Buildings for Homekey conversion have been difficult to locate and acquire.

Recommendation 3

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors and all city councils within the County identify possible Homekey sites including government owned properties in each jurisdiction.

City of Goleta Response: Agree: Has been implemented

As of January 10, 2022, two hotels are in negotiation with the Housing Authority of the County of Santa Barbara for the purpose of submitting a Project Homekey application with the State of California. The staff in the City of Goleta have worked closely with Housing Authority staff to support this effort. One Homekey project is located in the City of Goleta at 6021 Hollister Avenue, currently the Super 8 Motel. On January 11, 2022, the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors approved a reservation of \$3,047,501 in American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) funds, HOME-ARP funds, and additional ARPA or Homeless Housing Assistance and Prevention Program (HHAP) funds, to the Project. In addition, on January 5, 2022, the City Council of the City of Goleta reserved \$600,000 in ARPA funding for the Housing Authority Homekey project to acquire this site for permanent supportive housing for homeless individuals, contingent on a successful Homekey 2.0 application.

Furthermore, the City of Goleta has committed staff resources to supporting potential developers with the search for commercial property that might be converted to residential under the Project Homekey competitive funding.

Finding 5

Both Project Roomkey and Project Homekey are reliant on short-term or one-time funding from the State and Federal governments.

Recommendation 5

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors and all city councils within the County develop and implement a plan for funding Roomkey and Homekey-type programs.

City of Goleta Response: Disagree Partially

The City of Goleta, as a small municipality, should not be expected to fund programs such as Roomkey and Homekey on its own. Project Homekey represents a significant investment in the creation of housing. Currently, cities such as Goleta, without the benefit of bond funds or other sources set aside for the large-scale capital costs associated with housing development, cannot reasonably commit to the kind of ongoing capital subsidy Project Homekey provides. However, as stated in response to previous findings, the City of Goleta has reserved \$600,000 in ARPA funding toward the

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acquisition of a Homekey site in Goleta by the County Housing Authority and is committed to streamlining the process to making this site and other commercial properties work for housing. Such efforts would include considering the impact of zoning laws and building codes.

In addition, for fiscal year, 2021-22, the City of Goleta has committed a record amount of funding to combatting the problem of homelessness. To date, over \$827,000 has been committed to housing people who are homeless. The bulk of these funds, \$536,565, has been to pay for a Project Roomkey-style program without the benefit of the one-time State funding. This effort is proposed to house 50 people permanently over the course of the fiscal year. Should this effort be successful, the City would consider continuing this program in the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

The City of Goleta looks to county, state and federal support to help create affordable housing within its City limits. The City of Goleta will continue to use CDBG and other funding sources to support outreach and bridge housing for the homeless. The City will also continue to work with the County and other members of the HOME Consortium to fund Homekey projects, permanent supportive housing, and other affordable housing projects in the region. With a City Council committed to creating more affordable housing and ending homelessness, actions such as inclusionary requirements, zoning changes, and developer waivers have already occurred and will also be part of future efforts.

This concludes our responses to the Grand Jury's Report. For any additional assistance we can provide on this, please feel free to contact Jaime Valdez, Neighborhood Services Director at jvaldez@cityofgoleta.org or by phone at 805-961-7568.

Sincerely,


Michelle Greene
City Manager

cc: Jaime Valdez, Neighborhood Services Director

The Honorable Judge Gustavo Lavayen, Presiding Judge, Santa Barbara County Grand Jury, 312 East Cook Street, Santa Maria, CA 93454

Santa Barbara County Grand Jury
Digital Copy to: sbcgj@sbcourts.org