CITY OF SANTA CRUZ

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HOMELESSNESS (CACH)

FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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AUGUST 11, 2020

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

June 23, 2020

Mayor Cummings and City Council
809 Center Street, Room 10
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Dear Mayor Cummings and City Council Members:

On behalf of the members of the Community Advisory Committee on Homelessness, we are pleased to transmit our Report: *Santa Cruz City Community Advisory Committee on Homelessness: Final Report and Recommendations.* This report serves as the culmination of our 10-month process and addresses the charge of the CACH as stipulated by the April 9, 2019 City Council Agenda Report on the subject.

The CACH committed to exploring the complex issue of homelessness and the specific impacts of this nationwide problem within the City of Santa Cruz. The CACH was designed to ensure its members represented diverse backgrounds, perspectives and life experiences. As a group, we worked cohesively to learn about the pressing issues facing people experiencing homelessness, to engage with a wide array of experts in the field, to learn about the intersection of homelessness and the work of various City departments, and to listen to community-members express their viewpoints and experiences with homelessness. Our committee's goal was to engage with a diverse cross-section of citizens, organizations and agencies in order to develop well-informed recommendations to bring to City Council.

Through our extensive work together, we learned that Santa Cruz faces a host of complex challenges, and that our local governments (City and County), social service providers, and community members need to work collaboratively in order to address them effectively. While some of the conversations were quite difficult given the sensitive nature of the topics and the CACH was not always in full agreement on each and every recommendation, we remained committed to the process, analyzed the issues and worked to achieve consensus in our decision-making to develop feasible recommendations for your review. We stand behind this serious work and are deeply appreciative of the time, energy and thought that our Convener, Fred Keeley, City of Santa Cruz staff, Susie O'Hara, Megan Bunch and Ron Prince, and the expert panelists and other participants added to the process.

With the newly formed Homelessness Taskforce, led by the County of Santa Cruz Human Services Department, focusing on how to best serve those experiencing homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Santa Cruz has a unique opportunity to address many of the issues we identified through a collaborative cross-jurisdictional approach. We urge the City Council and City staff to review the report and determine how best to operationalize the recommendations. We understand that the City will need time to assess each recommendation and work with its partners to make them a reality. That being said, we ask that the City Council conduct a 6-month and 12-month check-in with the community to measure progress made on these recommendations.

Thank you all for your continued work to make Santa Cruz a community focused on social justice, health in all policies, and ensuring our most vulnerable community members are provided with dignified support and care.

Sincerely,

Candice Elliott and Taj Leahy
Community Advisory Committee on Homelessness, Co-Chairs

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With the Santa Cruz City Council's vision to create a diverse stakeholder group to grapple with the challenge of homelessness, the Community Advisory Committee on Homelessness (CACH) convened on July 30, 2019 and set a path towards developing tangible policy recommendations to improve quality of life for both those unhoused and housed in Santa Cruz. Over a period of seven months, the CACH, comprised of 13 talented, passionate, and articulate individuals, tackled the vexing questions of what will really make a difference for those experiencing homelessness, how to lead difficult dialogue by example, and, ultimately, how to move the community towards positive and real change.

Through the course of its it education and deliberations, the CACH members engaged with policy documents, City and County staff, community stakeholders, and experts in the field to build collective knowledge on best practices, innovative programs, and the policy landscape at the regional, state and federal level. However, even more importantly, the CACH engaged deeply with those unhoused in the community, including five CACH members with lived experience, on their unique and profound needs and how best to meet those needs.

With this knowledge base, the CACH grounded itself in making change in three focused areas: community engagement, public health, and sanctioned camping/safe sleeping. Although only three threads in the fabric of homelessness policy, the CACH felt that making progress in these areas would advance the City towards positive dialogue, dignity first solutions and incremental change in shelter access.

The CACH provided two progress reports to City Council during their process, one focused on immediate policy recommendations to meet urgent needs, and the second focused on mid-term recommendations to move towards sustainable change. Those recommendations included:

- The installation of two (2) additional ADA portable toilets with hand washing stations that are in a covered and well-lighted area, distributed throughout the downtown, open 24/7.
- To keep Louden Nelson Community Center restrooms open only to patrons of Louden Nelson.
- For the City to continue to help fund the 1220 River Street camp program by supporting the County to write a new contract with the Salvation Army to continue services at a new location.
- The creation of additional (a) managed low-barrier, ADA accessible emergency shelter program(s) to be opened last winter, either in the City limits or with a shuttle service from the City to the shelter if outside City limits. The shelter program should include ongoing feedback with regular meetings between the management and the community.
- The relocation of the shuttle pick-up site for the Laurel Street shelter program to an indoor or sheltered location.
- The expansion of CACH by one (1) individual member, with CACH determining the nomination criteria.
- The creation and implementation of additional shelter programs to include the input and feedback of management, the community, and organizations representing people experiencing homelessness.
- The City Council fund a comprehensive community engagement program to include facilitated meetings across the community, and across demographics and constituents, with an independent or specially designated facilitator(s).
- The creation of one RV sewage dumping site within the City limits.
- Managed and accountable models of shelter and safe sleeping sited with specific criteria to ensure ease of access for users and neighborhood compatibility.
- Increased access to hygiene facilities including mobile showers with case management and a complementary program to collect data on hygiene programs to ensure a sustainable and effective long-term approach.

- Increased and proactive community engagement to ensure the community is intimately involved, especially around safe sleeping, in dialogue on solutions with the Council as the body embarks on future policy decisions.
- Camping municipal code amendments to increase safe parking capacity at faith-based parking lots, decriminalize the act of sleeping, and ensure the environmentally and high risk areas of the City are protected from the impacts of high density, unsanctioned camping.

While not an exhaustive list, the policies set forth by the CACH were intended to alleviate the foreseen challenges of being unsheltered during the winter season, improve access to hygiene resources, create new opportunities for low barrier shelter in the City, and create clarity around the enforcement of camping in high risk and environmentally sensitive areas.

The CACH's process was cut short by the COVID-19 pandemic, but ironically, COVID-19 didn't cut short the progress made by the CACH. Because of COVID-19, new attention has been paid at the federal, State and County level on homelessness response, and many of the CACH's recommendations are integral to the emergency public health actions set forth to minimize the spread of the virus and protect our most vulnerable community members. New shelters have been erected, new sanctioned camps have been opened, new hygiene facilities have been deployed, new comprehensive community engagement has commenced, new visioning of Coral Street has taken place, and new systems have been put into place. Each of the three focus areas of the CACH are entwined into COVID-19 programming with brand new fiscal and community support.

Given this progress, the CACH enthusiastically recommends the Council leverages that hopeful momentum by investing in new community engagement processes focused exclusively on homelessness response, studying the effectiveness and maintaining the hygiene resources that have been deployed, using the lesson learned with, and community acceptance of, the COVID-19 safe sleeping programs to advance the potential for new sanctioned encampments within the City, and ultimately re-envisioning Coral Street to serve as a North County homeless support and housing navigation campus.

BACKGROUND

Proactive response and management of the vexing challenge of homelessness has been policy priority for the Santa Cruz City Council for several decades. Progress has been slow and cyclical, in part given the very narrow role cities play in health and human services and, in part, due to the complexity of the issue. Effective homelessness response is driven in breadth and depth by the intricacy of the root causes of homelessness, the significant and varied needs each individual requires to exit homelessness, and the political, fiscal and policy framework that must be developed and drawn from county, state and federal governments to make real progress. Often these significant complexities stymie local governments from making proactive change, creating frustration on part of unhoused and housed community members alike.

For the last several years, the City Council has recommitted to investing in the response to homelessness, with the aim of reducing human suffering and mitigating the real impacts street homelessness has on the community. Shortly after the 2018 election, which saw a political shift of the Council membership, the Council became deeply entrenched in homelessness-related policy largely in response to a growing unsanctioned encampment a community gateway (Gateway Encampment). Early in 2019, the issue of homelessness dominated the Council's agenda, with several high-level policy considerations brought forward including sweeping City ordinance changes regarding transitional encampments and safe parking, recreational vehicle parking on Delaware Avenue, homelessness state of emergency and shelter crisis declarations, project charters for transitional encampments and parks facilities management, siting of a safe sleeping and storage programs on City property, an interim management plan for the Gateway Encampment, Standard Operating

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Procedures for Vacating Homeless Encampments that Contain Significant Health and Safety or Nuisance Conditions (SOPs) and the concept of Community Advisory Committee on Homelessness (CACH).

As evidenced by the above topics, the Council tackled considerable and complicated policy in a short timeframe and attempted to balance the urgency of responding to a growing health and safety crisis at the Gateway Encampment with ensuring the community was included in developing tangible solutions. The balance became difficult to strike as the community was very polarized around the issue. Given that, the Council elected to immediately begin the process of the CACH to bring the community together and ensure diverse voices at the table regarding both short and long-term homelessness policy.

At its April 9, 2019 meeting, Councilmembers unanimously moved to create the CACH charged to advise the City Council on homelessness policy and actions, incorporating education and community engagement, in furtherance of City-adopted policy regarding homelessness including the All-In Plan, the Homelessness Coordinating Committee 20 Action Recommendations and the 2x2 Committee. Council's motion included direction on the preferred composition of the committee with intent to create a diverse stakeholder group representing the following sectors:

- Homelessness advocacy
- Health care with special focus on the local system of homelessness care and solutions
- Education
- Employment and job creation
- Local business
- Neighborhood representation
- Community members with lived homelessness experience
- Behavioral health and/or addiction system of care
- Policy and governmental expertise on homelessness
- Youth homelessness
- Student
- Others as identified by nomination and selection process

The CACH application was released on April 15, 2019 and with a one-week extension, due on May 6, 2019. In response to a strong call to action through print/social media and word of mouth, staff received 52 CACH applications from a wide cross-section of community members. Applications were received within each identified stakeholder sector, with many applicants noting more than one stakeholder affiliation. Of important note was the diverse interest, from recently arrived residents to long-time advocates, across professional and life experiences, gender, age and background.

The Council selected a cadre of exceptional applicants to form the CACH, each bringing unique perspectives, passions and backgrounds. Those members, and a brief cut out of their application statements, were:

- **Co-Chair Candice Elliott,** "There aren't words to describe how much I would appreciate the chance to serve on this Advisory Committee. I see this as an opportunity to find effective ways of addressing homelessness in our community, and hopefully creating a blueprint which could be used in other communities in the US who are also experiencing increased numbers of people experiencing homelessness. In addition to this work, I would enjoy working with people of diverse backgrounds on this issue and to engage with the community and other committee members."
- **Co-Chair Taj Leahy,** "I am a spiritual person yet I am practical as well. I believe that we must be heart-forward in our intent as well as conscious of our steps with regard to peoples' lives. I would like to identify the needs of the homeless/addiction community and support those needs getting met. Likewise, I feel like this is a perfect time to lay bare the causes of homelessness and addiction and work toward societal change.

- **Alie Soares,** "Since experiencing homelessness I have been humbled in ways unexplainable to most unless you've been there. I have a strong voice & lived experience in this demonized population. I want to help make, create & sustain change not only for myself; for others as well. I feel that my experiences as a disabled, currently housed in transitional housing homeless woman speaks for on overlooked demographic that faces not only the same challenges as my "peers" but also hurdles that an able bodied person doesn't."
- **Ami Chen Mills,** "I have been both watching and attending City Council meetings over the past couple months. I truly feel I understand each person's "separate reality"--from progressive activists to parents, business owners and even Council members. Underneath it all, we each want to feel safe, secure, respected and even loved (we can say respect is a form of love.) I don't agree with every opinion, but I can see the "kernel of truth" in almost everyone's statements. I enjoy community engagement, I enjoy life in general, even with all its bumps, and I believe I would enjoy the admittedly daunting challenge of this opportunity to try to bring more alignment to City plans for the houseless."
- **Aran Nicol,** "Homelessness and injection drug use in Santa Cruz have risen to the level of a public health emergency and the community has an obligation to address these issues in a way that respects the rights of individuals and the broader population. The factors contributing to these crises are complex and mirror trends throughout the US related to rising housing costs, inequalities of income, education and opportunity, stigma, declines in behavioral health services, and the more widespread use of opiates and methamphetamine."
- **Brooke Newman,** "My direct service experience has helped numerous members of our community gain access to benefits, shelter, employment and recovery from homelessness. My work is designed to help others achieve the goals that they set for themselves. I facilitate change that allows for people experiencing homelessness to work within a structure, while exercising agency in their choices to move forward that is free from coercion."
- **Don Lane,** I have dedicated much of my adult life to working on issues related to homelessness and will continue that work in the years ahead. Three terms as mayor and three terms on the city council have provided many opportunities for me to speak both formally and informally with thousands of individuals and dozens of organizations on controversial issues."
- **Dwaine Tait,** "Over the years, I have learned a great deal from my participation with collaborative work groups and committees. Perhaps, the most important lessons I have learned and been able to put into practice are the ideas of true collaboration and true compromise when guiding deliberation and eventually decision making. As a member of our community here in Santa Cruz and as a person that has spent their career in service to others am I committed to assisting to address the homelessness problem here in Santa Cruz."
- **Evan Morrison,** "I consistently develop relationships with people who are homeless and service providers throughout the county, and support homeless folks into getting into housing. Though my specialty has been veterans, I have successfully connected people from all walks of life with services that assisted them in ending their homelessness."
- **Frank Sanchez*,** "I am interested because I am currently homeless and have knowledge of all aspects of this epidemic. I've worked for the Homeless Services Center and managed, as well as worked at, the Winter Shelter program. I've grown fond of many of the homeless people and fully understand their hardships."
- **Ingrid Trejo*,** "Homelessness is a crisis for both this community and the person experiencing it. Many people become homeless because of a sudden illness, family disintegration or job loss, among the many reasons. In my work, we found housing for the homeless families we were serving through the limited rental vacancies in this community. It can be done, families can find homes, it takes a lot of work, collaboration and responsible partnership with everyone, especially landlords. I believe this City can help its neighbors who spend their days and nights on the streets with effective planning, partnership and the courage to try."

- **Katie Woolsey*,** "I serve on the board of directors of Walnut Avenue Family & Women's Center and previously worked as a consultant to write our 5-year cultural responsiveness and strategic plan. Because homelessness touches many of our participants, this work involved deep research into all the available data and studies for the county and liaising with staff at other county organizations who work with precariously housed and unhoused persons."
- **Raphael Sonnenfeld,** "My goal is to bring people together to find solutions that are widely accepted, and to ensure that the needs of all stakeholders are heard and accounted for. While I understand the imperative to act quickly to address very serious health and safety risks our city faces, it is also critical for solutions to those problems to be vetted by experts, and for the community to be engaged in their implementation."
- **Serg Kagno,** "I'm excited to be of this committee. We are at a pivotal time in Santa Cruz with significant, new state funding, and we are experiencing a very polarized community discussion. This is an amazing opportunity to bring different stakeholders together to try to find solutions to meet everyone's needs.'
- **Stina Roach,** "I want to be part of the solution!! Help others like myself. I am a passionate person. I know what empathy is. Want the education. Great with all people."
- **Stoney Brook,** "I believe we need to be intentionally strategic – fiscally, politically, legally and humanely – in our thoughts and actions. Part of our blockage comes from an 'All or Nothing', 'Either/Or' narrative; we cannot move if we see only A and B as solutions. We need to embrace solutions that respect the concerns – real or perceived – of all residents."

*CACH members who resigned before this report was drafted.

The CACH was given several months of educational and deliberative time to create informed policy. Given that, the Council moved all current homelessness policy considerations under the umbrella of the CACH process to ensure the community had been given an opportunity to fully engage and build consensus on immediate, short-term and long-term solutions. The process was intended to demonstrate a commitment on the part of the City to develop solutions, as well as an opportunity to identify system gaps in a thoughtful and deliberative way.

Understanding that homelessness policy dialogue is highly challenging and divisive in the community, the Council's imparted its shared value to create opportunities for the community to engage and build consensus within the CACH, and create a committee that:

- listens and validates
- honors, not challenges each other's stories
- is accountable for self / organizational behavior
- defines shared beliefs
- moves to the center and away from extremes, and
- embraces compromise as a means to an end

With a dynamic, skilled and vocal membership, the CACH held its first meeting in July 2019 and set a path to achieve the Council's vision by 1. understanding the long-standing policy trends within the City; 2. identifying the unique needs of those with lived experience; 3. understanding the City and region's current investment in homelessness response and where there are system gaps and failures; and 4. developing immediate, mid and long-term policy recommendations to ground the City's response to homelessness within the larger system of care provided by the County, State and federal governments.

Within a few weeks of completion, the CACH's work was cut short by the COVID-19 pandemic. While troubling to not finish the important work at the time, the pandemic created new opportunities to advance much of the vision of the CACH, creating novel collaboration and work not seen in Santa Cruz since the Loma Prieta earthquake. Although not originally conceived as a work product from the CACH, this report also reflects on those new opportunities and how best to leverage new system performance for long-term benefit.

CITY OF SANTA CRUZ HOMELESSNESS POLICY ACROSS THE DECADES

With a goal to identify and advance homelessness-related City policy to improve quality of life for the entire community, both housed and unhoused, the Council envisioned the CACH's work plan to be built around several objectives including:

- Increase knowledge of homelessness issues and best practices across the CACH and community.
- Amend, reprioritize and determine policy gaps and feasibility of the Homeless Coordinating Committee 20 recommendations.
- Define community-supported program models and siting for homeless shelter programs (emergency, navigation, transitional encampments, etc.).
- Increase political and community will to site homelessness-related programs.
- Define City role in homelessness response and integrate role with County system and continuum of care.

An important element of the CACH's work plan was to frame its policy recommendations within the context of current and previously conceived homelessness policy, especially related to the above-mentioned Homeless Coordinating Committee's 20 recommendations (Attachment 1). The CACH spent several of its first meetings learning about the decades of homelessness policy drafted by the City, and how that policy has remained relatively consistent throughout the years.

The CACH learned of policy developed within three distinct yet complimentary plans spanning a 20-year period including recent policy (2018-2019) as considered by the Council, the 2017 Homeless Coordinating Committee Report and Recommendations, and the 2000 Homeless Issues Task Force (Attachment 2). Each set of policies was derived by different Councils during different periods of community politics and vitality, yet each plan includes sets of policies that generally fit into the following categories:

- **Direct Services:** Improve outreach and engagement with unsheltered community members, create day services and provide increased access to dignified supportive services such as jobs programs, storage, hygiene and cell phone charging.
- **Sheltering and Housing:** Increase local shelter capacity to serve the diverse community of unsheltered individuals with new innovate approaches such as transitional encampments, safe sleeping sites, and navigation centers.
- **Legislation/Advocacy:** Build and maintain a legislative advocacy system at the regional, state and federal level to increase fiscal, administrative and operational support to local municipalities.
- **Systems Improvements:** Identify system gaps and improve system response with enhanced and collaborative governance, access to care, and internal/external organizational structures.
- **Municipal Code/Ordinances:** Improve City enforcement response to crimes of poverty/homelessness by amending the municipal code to address behavioral problems but not penalize the status of homelessness.

As evidenced the in the attached table (Attachment 3), the dozens of contemplated polices are generally consistent and on theme to the above categories and can be summarized with an action-oriented approach to create more and effective: dignity-first programming to alleviate the burden of living outside; innovative and sustainable shelter beds to meet diverse needs and lower barriers while supporting those on their path to housing; affordable and permanent supportive housing beds; legislative advocacy to shine a light on the lack of state and federal resources afforded to small cities, especially those with large homeless per capita ratios; interwoven and collaborative system response; and lastly, evolved municipal code to ensure equitable enforcement of behavioral and crime issues.

With this sense of history, the CACH committed to develop a work plan that built upon the work of previous Councils while engaging with the community of the current and pressing needs. That work plan, executed over the 7-month period served as the roadmap to the new policy set forth in this document.

CACH WORK PLAN AND SUBCOMMITTEE APPROACH

Early creation of communication ground rules, decision making criteria, bylaws and a consistent work plan was paramount to the success of the CACH. For the first several weeks of convening, the CACH committed to establishing a working framework for education, engagement and deliberation and met the following objectives:

- Approved a meeting schedule.
- Increased the CACH membership by two to better capture the voice of those with lived experience.
- Received a presentation on the Brown Act and the role of committees in government policy.
- Approved CACH Bylaws. (Attachment 4)
- Elected Co-Chairs.
- Conducted a review of all past City policy related to homelessness. (Attachment 3)
- Received presentation by Focus Strategies on county-wide homeless systems assessment. (Attachment 5)
- Began development of the Phase 1 Work Plan. (Attachment 6)
- Engaged in a Dynamic Facilitation Process. (Attachment 7)
- Approved the following Subcommittees:
  - o Community Engagement;
  - o Public Health; and
  - o Sanctioned Campgrounds and Safe Sleeping.
- Received a presentation on policy development and structure.
- Received a presentation on current funding sources. (Attachment 8)

This early work served as the first phase of education for the CACH ensuring a baseline of knowledge on the subject was obtained and those with lived experience provided their important perspectives to the group. Additionally and of critical importance, the CACH was introduced to the work of Focus Strategies, a nationally recognized consulting firm contracted by the County to perform a systems analysis of the regional homelessness response system.

The CACH conducted a study session with Focus Strategies and heard the results of their Homeless System Baseline Assessment Report and Action Items (Attachment 5). The Focus Strategies work is intended to pave the strategic roadmap to regional homelessness response by connecting systems, minimizing duplicative efforts and identifying and resolving gaps in service. Knowing that the regional effort was being conducted at the same time as the CACH, it was important to orient the CACH members to that overarching lens to ensure the work of the CACH was complementary to the systems approach.

Further, the CACH members were educated on the significant in-kind and direct expense homelessness and its impacts have on the City, where that investment goes and what outcomes are achieved. That overview of the fiscal impact is included as (Attachment 8) and provides valuable insight into the need to integrate City homelessness response into a regional system.

With some of these educational building blocks in place, the CACH set forth to develop a feasible work plan aimed to meet the most pressing concerns in the City. With the help of a subcommittee of CACH members and engagement with the community, the CACH identified four areas of policy focus for immediate attention:

1. Secure hygiene resources: restrooms and showers.
2. Increase local shelter options, especially identify a new site for the managed River Street Camp, but may also consider effective program modeling for emergency shelter.
3. Identify sites (or acceptable siting criteria) for new outdoor emergency shelter solutions such as transitional encampments or safe sleeping.
4. Modify the camping ordinance.

Rather than tackling this complicated policy as a collective group, the CACH elected to form sub-committees to deep dive into three areas: community engagement, public health and sanctioned campgrounds and safe sleeping. These policy areas remained consistent throughout the CACH's work as committee members agreed to focus on recommendations bound by pragmatism, limited individual and collective capacity and resources. In other words, the CACH elected to focus on depth rather than breadth, hoping to deliver policy to the Council grounded in realistic feasibility.

CACH IMMEDIATE AND MID-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

By October 2019, the CACH had accomplished a significant level of work and education as noted above. Additionally, the CACH membership was becoming acutely aware of the real humanitarian crisis facing those living unsheltered and the resulting impacts to the entire community. With the winter season approaching, the CACH elected to focus immediate/urgent policy recommendations on improving conditions through the winter and brought those recommendations to Council in December 2019.

Those recommendations included the following:

- Installation of two (2) additional ADA portable toilets with hand washing stations that are in a covered and well-lighted area, distributed throughout the downtown, open 24/7.
- Keep Louden Nelson Community Center restrooms open only to patrons of Louden Nelson.
- City continue to help fund the 1220 River Street shelter program by supporting the County to write a new contract with the Salvation Army to continue services at a new location.
- Creation of additional managed low-barrier, ADA accessible emergency shelter program(s) to be opened this winter, either in the City limits or with a shuttle service from the City to the shelter if outside City limits. The shelter program should include ongoing feedback with regular meetings between the management and the community.
- Relocation of the shuttle pick-up site for the Laurel Street shelter program to an indoor or sheltered location.
- Expansion of CACH by one (1) individual member, with CACH determining the nomination criteria.
- Creation and implementation of additional shelter programs to include the input and feedback of management, the community, and organizations representing people experiencing homelessness.

- The City Council fund a comprehensive community engagement program to include facilitated meetings across the community, and across demographics and constituents, with an independent or specially designated facilitator(s).
- The creation of one (1) RV sewage dumping site within the City limits.

The Council accepted those recommendations and staff began working to implement all of them, prioritizing the addition of hygiene resources, relocating and weather-protecting the winter shelter intake site, and sustaining and adding winter shelter beds to the north county portfolio.

Within two months of its first presentation to Council, the CACH returned in February 2020 with its second report and mid-term policy recommendations. Guided by shared principles of prioritizing outreach, developing new accessible shelter options including safe sleeping, and recognizing human rights considerations when amending the camping ordinance, the CACH delivered the attached set of recommendations.

The CACH presented 22 recommendations to Council within the following policy areas:

- Managed and accountable models of shelter and safe sleeping sited with specific criteria to ensure ease of access for users and neighborhood compatibility.
- Increased access to hygiene facilities including mobile showers with case management and a complementary program to collect data on hygiene programs to ensure a sustainable and effective long-term approach.
- Increased and proactive community engagement to ensure the community is intimately involved, especially around safe sleeping, in dialogue on solutions with the Council as the body embarks on future policy decisions.
- Camping municipal code amendments to increase safe parking capacity at faith-based parking lots, decriminalize the act of sleeping, and ensure the environmentally and high risk areas of the city are protected from the impacts of high density, unsanctioned camping.

The Council contemplated all 22 mid-term recommendations and advanced the vast majority of them in addition to the immediate recommendations accepted in December (Attachment 9). In fact, the overarching consensus of the CACH was not only accepted by the Council, but plans for implementation of the mid-term policy recommendations advanced fairly quickly thereafter.

Shortly after their February update to Council, the emerging COVID-19 pandemic abruptly changed the course of the CACH, and unfortunately, the CACH failed to provide its last scheduled update to the Council at an April meeting. That update was set to include the CACH's long-term vision for the City and how best to integrate Focus Strategies work into the City's strategic planning. However, even in the face of the dire conditions of the pandemic, new, relevant and opportunistic developments have arisen, allowing for the CACH to finish its work, sunset the committee, and layer its final recommendations within a new regional, state and federal policy environment focused not only protecting the vulnerable homeless community from the virus, but streamlining and removing barriers to program improvement and implementation.

CACH RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE AGE OF COVID-19

CACH policy deliberations were formed during a sea change of homelessness response leadership at the state level. The County of Santa Cruz and CA-508 Watsonville/Santa Cruz City and County Continuum of Care (CoC), also known as the Homeless Action Partnership (HAP), spent much of the 2018 and 2019 distributing in excess of $11 million of state grant funds to local government and non-profit agencies serving the homeless community. Through the State's Homeless Emergency Assistance Program (HEAP) and California

Emergency Solutions and Housing (CESH) program, several local initiatives took shape, including the transition of seasonal/overnight emergency shelter beds to year round/24/7, beginning steps of shaping a county-wide approach to regional navigation centers, enhanced rental assistance programming, and a transitional age youth demonstration project (Attachment 10).

In February of this year, Governor Newsom, in an unprecedented demonstration of commitment, devoted nearly the entire State of the State address to the issue of homelessness. Newsom told the full California Legislature in the Assembly chambers, "[n]o amount of progress can camouflage the most pernicious crisis in our midst, that's the ultimate manifestation of poverty: homelessness".

Newsom then outlined his Administration's five-part approach – reducing street homelessness quickly and humanely through emergency actions, getting the mentally ill out of tents and into treatment, providing stable funding to get sustainable results, tackling the underproduction of affordable housing in California, and tracking outcomes with accountability and consequences.

On the heels of the State of the State address, the Governor made available $650 million in State Emergency Homeless Aid and issued a challenge for cities and counties to partner with the state on immediate impact solutions to tackle homelessness. Buttressed by two years of momentum, coupled with these new funds, initiatives and related Executive Orders (Attachment 11), the County rose to that challenge and was poised to finalize the Focus Strategies work, which promised to provide the roadmap to a system-wide response to homelessness in Santa Cruz County. Within a few short weeks of Newsom's address, the COVID-19 pandemic was declared worldwide and the attention of the entire state and nation turned to slowing the spread of the virus.

What could've been a devastating blow to the progress made at the State and County level to address homelessness, in actuality became an opportunity to further advance state-wide goals and define with laser focus the need for a coordinated and effective local response. Over the past ten weeks, the County, in partnership with local cities and non-profit agencies, has led an effort to significantly bolster the homelessness shelter and care system, adding XX emergency beds to the system and developed new outreach techniques to ensure vulnerable community members are provided health screenings and resources to safely shelter in place. Furthermore, a robust system of hygiene resources was deployed across the county to increase access to restroom and handwashing.

Most importantly, the County initiated the countywide homeless response to the COVID-19 emergency through the County's Incident Command Structure (ICS). Within the County's Emergency Operations Center (EOC), under the authority of County Health Officer Dr. Gail Newell, the Human Services Department (HSD) Shelter and Care Departmental Operations Center (DOC) kick started the COVID-19 Homelessness Task Force, comprised of dozens of staff across government and non-profit sectors (Attachment 12). Divisions of the Shelter and Care DOC include Stabilizing Existing Shelter; Shelter Expansion; Transition Age Youth Sheltering in Place (TAY-SIP); Quarantine and Isolation (Q/I); and Homeless Outreach and Service Sites (HOSS). Each of these Divisions is rapidly implementing a wide range of emergency activities with a level of coordination and cooperation never seen locally around the issue of homelessness. This new level of coordination has provided important clarity around roles, shone light on the potential for real and tangible change, and created a new sense of partnership among agencies working in silos for years.

Further, COVID-19 has brought additional state and federal funding sources to the table, allowing for the County and partners to build into COVID-19-related response long-term and sustainable strategies. Of equal importance, needed systems improvements, as forecasted by Focus Strategies, have become acutely day lighted, requiring urgent resolution to ensure effective COVID-19 response. New programs like a universal shelter referral system, coordinated provider engagement, shelter technical assistance, physical and behavior health support at shelters, a new TAY shelter, new multi-disciplinary street outreach teams, a pilot case

management and housing navigation program, and a re-envisioning of congregate shelter at the Coral Street campus, all grew out of the COVID-19 crises, all important steps to significantly improve the homelessness system of care in the county.

CACH FINAL POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TO CITY COUNCIL

With a rapidly evolving policy landscape due to the Governor's recent focus on homelessness and the emergent COVID-19 mandates, the CACH serves as a forum to ground this expanding universe of policy and funding to meet the City's unique needs. As noted above in the report, the CACH subcommittees served as the compass arrow for the CACH's vision, focusing collective effort to develop policy in three areas: community engagement, public health, and sanctioned camping/safe sleeping. When weaving those vital focus areas into the current policy landscape, a few critical policy areas arise for the City Council's attention.

1. Community Engagement: Within the last several months, the HAP has contracted with local firm Miller Maxfield to build and deploy a comprehensive community engagement plan for the regional response to homelessness. Under the COVID-19 crisis, Miller Maxfield has played a critical role in maintaining a strong platform of engagement with the community on all aspects of the Homelessness Task Force work. The CACH recommends that, under the leadership of the new Homelessness Response Manager (HRM), to work to develop a City-centric community engagement plan on homelessness which focuses on maintaining the important engagement fostered by the CACH and clearly delineates the City's management role within the overarching county and state response to homelessness. If the City is successful in recruiting and onboarding a new Communications Manager, it would be expected for that role to assist the HRM to accomplish this task. If the position is not filled, the CACH recommends the Council commit funds, not to exceed $10 thousand, to contract with a consultant to develop and deploy the plan.

2. Public Health: Under COVID-19, the City has deployed dozens of new portable restroom and handwashing facilities across the community. The CACH recommends leaving the vast majority of those new facilities in place through COVID-19 recovery and beyond, and building infrastructure to ensure the portable facilities blend aesthetically with the surrounding landscape and limit vandalism potential. To meet this objective safely and effectively, the CACH recommends the City conduct an audit of the current facilities and their use, especially focusing on positive community maintenance and/or damage/vandalism and engaging with unsheltered individuals on access considerations. With that information, the City can build a hygiene facility maintenance plan, which may require some level of janitorial staffing assistance to ensure long-term sustainability.

3. Sanctioned Camping and Safe Sleeping: Again under COVID-19, the City, in partnership with the County's Homelessness Task Force, has deployed three safe sleeping zones (one tent camp on Coral Street, fully managed by Housing Matters, one tent camp at the Benchlands, under development, and one RV/car camp at Lot 17 fully managed by the Association of Faith Communities). While all safe sleeping zones were rapidly built to ensure adequate social distancing and shelter in place objectives were met, their genesis provides a unique opportunity for the City to leverage the successful operational and policy elements of the programs to build long-term safe sleeping models. It is recommended to maintain a similar or larger scale of safe sleeping through COVID-19 recovery and beyond, and use lessons learned during the COVID-19 response to ensure constant process improvement and community compatibility.

4. Envision Coral Street as a North County homeless support and housing navigation campus. As mentioned above, Coral Street is hosting one of the first sanctioned safe sleeping zones in Santa Cruz. Due to social distancing and shelter in place orders, unsanctioned encampments on Coral Street and the adjacent railroad right of ways were restructured and camp residents were moved into

a managed camp and other shelter beds. With that change in environment and programming, an opportunity arises to re-envision Coral Street as the confluence of homeless services, community building and volunteer service in North County and leverage the industrial design aesthetic, railroad, and businesses of the Harvey West neighborhood to create a plan to improve neighborhood compatibility with homelessness services and re-invigorate community pride in the important social justice work historically sited in the area.

CONCLUSION

As evidenced by the robust CACH process, and the new developments at the state and regional level, the City is poised to continue to make good progress on homelessness response. Of paramount importance, the City must maintain connection with State, County and regional stakeholders, especially the homeless community, on policy considerations and ensure community engagement remains a top priority.

Knowing that members of the CACH remain committed to advancing the recommendations of the body, and the work of the subcommittees laid the foundational elements of the CACH's direction, it is recommended to use this document and call upon the CACH members/subcommittees when the Council begins to engage with their renewed strategic planning process, and maintain the three subcommittee tenets, community engagement, public health and sanctioned camping/safe sleeping, in the forefront of the City's strategic planning around homelessness. Many of the CACH members transitioned from the CACH to working closely on elements of the county-wide regional COVID-19 response, focusing on shelter operations, safe sleeping, community engagement and other important priorities. Given the strength of the membership and their ongoing commitment to this challenging work, future opportunities for engagement in policy-making are sure to be of interest to the members of the CACH. Staff commits to ensuring, when opportunities arise, that the CACH is updated and their expertise is drawn upon to keep this vital document living into the future.

A Snapshot of Homelessness

CITY OF SANTA CRUZ

Homeless: **1,204** people in the City of Santa Cruz

Disabling Conditions That Contribute to Homelessness*

Psychiatric condition	39%
Substance use disorder	38%
Post-traumatic stress disorder	32%
Chronic health condition	31%
Traumatic brain injury	18%
AIDS/HIV-related condition	2%

Duration of Homelessness*

- 30 days or less — 7%
- 1-11 months — 31%
- 1 year or longer — 49%
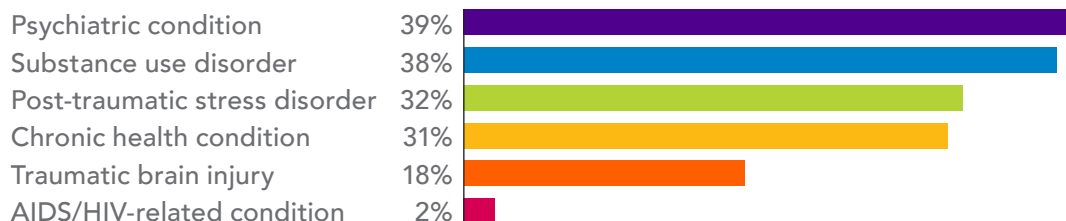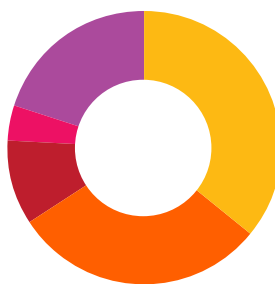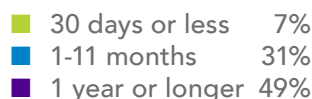
Locations*

80% Unsheltered

Streets	36%
Vehicles	30%
Encampments	10%
Abandoned structures	4%
Sheltered	20%
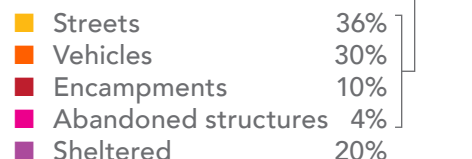
*Santa Cruz County
Source: 2017 Point-in-Time Homeless Census

Short Horizon Solutions (0-3 years), Adopted by City Council

Support the Implementation and Success of Coordinated Entry
Provide support to launch and sustain this new system. Require that any City-supported homeless program to integrate with the system.

Increase Homeless Outreach Services and Mobile Behavioral Health/Mental Health Response
Expanded mobile mental health team from the County Health Services Agency. Consider additional outreach workers in the downtown.

Contract for Homeless Jobs Engagement Program
Contract with the Downtown Streets Team to provide homeless outreach and jobs opportunity. Team could assist with clean-ups, beautification projects, maintenance of downtown, dumping clean-up, and support services in public garages and other facilities.

Create a Triage Location/Expanded Recovery Center for Crisis Intervention
Explore partnerships with County and health providers to establish more treatment bed capacity and reserve one bed for on-demand treatment of people found in crisis. Expand services offered at the Recovery Center. Advocate to include mental health triage center for individuals who are sub-acute, but clearly in need of psychiatric intervention.

Secure Storage Facilities
Identify and secure facilities to allow individuals to check their possessions into a managed storage facility or rental storage lockers. Co-locate with other services and case management, or follow the storage, shower and laundry facility model (SHWASHLOCK).

Secure Hygiene Resources: Restrooms and Showers
Explore locations and providers of additional restrooms and showers dedicated for the homeless community. Consider hygiene buses or mobile restroom trailers, as well as supportive partnerships with the faith-based community, homeless advocates, businesses and other organizations.

Continue to Fund Homeward Bound
Appropriate $25,000 in the FY 2018 Budget for Homeward Bound. Outreach to other service-providing agencies to offer access to these funds. Invite the Homeless Action Partnership to jointly fund the program. Encourage public donations.

Secure Electronic Device Charging Resources
Research the charging station program at the library. Secure and site electronic device charging resources in the City. Encourage other locations outside of the City.

Short Horizon Solutions (continued)

Create a 2x2 Committee with the County
Formally invite the County to participate and schedule the first meeting for Summer 2017.

Explore Potential for Local Help from No Place Like Home Legislation (AB 1618)
Work with the County in anticipation of the Notice of Financial Availability release in Winter 2018.

Develop a Revenue Source for Housing
Support the work of the Affordable Housing Committee or other efforts to identify, create and dedicate funding for development of housing.

Coordinate State Advocacy with Other High-Ratio Homeless Communities

Engage in Strategic Planning with the Homeless Services Center, County and Other Service Partners
Coordinate State Advocacy with Other High-Ratio Homeless Communities.

Engage and Advocate Federal Representatives on Homelessness and Mental Illness Needs

Improve City's Internal Coordination System and Homeless Protocols from Front Line to Public Safety Staff, and Ensure Training and Support

Create Homelessness Information and Resource Page on City Website

Long Horizon Solutions (5+ years), Adopted by City Council

Cultivate Development of Housing
Support the development of housing.

In addition, three shelter options are recommended and are ranked in terms of priority:

#1 Consider San Francisco Navigation Center Model
Engage in partner and community discussions about a regional navigation center. This is the gold standard: a one-stop facility integrating rehabilitation, employment, shelter and wrap-around services.

#2 Pursue Permanent, Regional, Year-Round Homeless Shelter Center
Engage in partner and community discussion about a regional year-round homeless shelter center.

#3 Explore a Day Center with Basic Services and Case Management
Consider the re/establishment of a day center with basic services and case management workers to provide a productive environment that helps with immediate and long-term needs.

CITY OF
SANTA CRUZ

CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA REPORT

DATE: June 2, 2011

AGENDA OF: January 11, 2000

DEPARTMENT: Homeless Issues Task Force

SUBJECT: INTERIM REPORT FROM HOMELESS ISSUES TASK FORCE

RECOMMENDATION: That the City Council, by motion, accept the report and provide direction.

BACKGROUND:

The Homeless Issues Task Force was formed by the City Council to study homeless issues and to develop recommendations to ameliorate the conditions and conflicts relating to the homeless.

Generally, our charge has been described in these terms:

1) the development of permanent year-round shelter for all segments of the homeless community; and
2) opportunities for improving currently provided services; and
3) the rights and responsibilities of homeless persons.

Eight members of the task force began work on August 16. Council completed appointments in October, bringing our number to 13. We have all committed to twice-monthly regular meetings, as well as task-driven subcommittees.

A general plan of approach flowed from our initial meetings. At first, task force meetings were very lengthy, but as we become more familiar with each other and the City's Advisory Board procedures, our productivity steadily improves. Attendance and participation continues to be excellent overall.

Three reasons we got rolling quickly deserve mention here. First, we had materials from the Council committee that reviewed the Camping Ordinance last year, as well as other background materials to orient us and overcome differences in backgrounds and experiences. Second, the City Manager had selected an incredible team for our staff, which provides the task force approximately 20 crucial hours per week. Third, there are a number of citizens who are not task force members who diligently attend task force and subcommittee meetings and who do heroic amounts of legwork.

The task force spent early sessions exploring ways to bring order around these overwhelming issues. Concerns and possibilities were separated into two categories: 1) Urgent, critical and emergent issues; and 2) Longer-term issues. Longer-term issues required greater exploration and more complex study, research, or development. The two issue lists then became a starting point

ITEM: _____

for subcommittees, to be prioritized and developed into coherent recommendations for the Council.

Four standing subcommittees meet regularly to prioritize, sort and prepare issues for the task force agenda. Subcommittees have taken on situations and issues which have been at impasse for a long time, and have determined to develop useful recommendations and resolutions. This brings subcommittee members up against immediate unmet needs of homeless and transitioning people, and in touch with the public's need for education about issues of homelessness. The standing subcommittees are:

   Shelter and Housing
   Legal and Law Enforcement
   Employment, Treatment, and Other Services
   Outreach, Advocacy and Process

Once we organized and broke into subcommittees, the need for gathering fresh, relevant information directly from homeless individuals and families was self-evident. We were further moved by recent reports of anti-homeless assaults. We resolved to make a safe and confidential way for people who can't or won't usually visit public hearings to participate. We directed the Outreach, Advocacy and Process subcommittee to set up opportunities in which we could all participate, thus learning more about assaults as well as the other daily experiences of homeless people. The Outreach, Advocacy and Process Subcommittee created opportunities in which all task force members could participate. We spent an afternoon, using varied modes of approach and documentation at the Homeless Community Resource Center. Thus we learned more about underreported assaults, along with hearing from homeless people about their daily experiences. This was an important aspect as the task force continued to prioritize its work.

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS:

The task force previously forwarded recommendations to the City Council on matters we believed were extremely urgent as winter approached. We asked that the Council move forward quickly on these items, driven by humanitarian concerns, without waiting for our final report in February. These were:

The Camping Ordinance - We recommended repeal of this ordinance since the City does not have adequate indoor shelter for all its residents (refer to our earlier correspondence to review the reasoning and ramifications of this recommendation). We acknowledge the number of citations has decreased because of the City's practice of issuing warnings rather than citations when possible.

Rent Stabilization - Nationally Santa Cruz ranks in the top five regions for the highest rents relative to incomes. Many of the homeless are regularly, or even fully, employed, and still cannot afford to rent a home. We recommended that the City adopt rent stabilization as a means of preventing new homelessness and as a means of assisting currently homeless back into housing.

Living Wage - Because of the high cost of living, the task force recommends that the Council consider supporting a Living Wage Ordinance.

The following subcommittee reports include work in progress. Some may not be addressed in the time remaining to the task force.

Safe Sleeping Zones - We recommended that the City create safe, legal sleeping zones as there is clearly not enough appropriate indoor shelter, and those sleeping outside are subject to the threat of citation and arrest and the threat of violence against themselves.

Parking Restrictions - We recommend that no additional parking restrictions be imposed for the purpose of reducing vehicular sleeping since there are no legal alternatives in place and more enforcement would create more difficulties. The task force supports a citywide approach which encompasses viable alternatives, both for people who sleep in vehicles and for housed neighbors.

Winter Shelter access—we recommend increased access to the Armory with a night bus and a linking bus to Labor Ready in the morning to accommodate the working homeless.

In addition to these recommendations, we would like to note our success in expediting the implementation of reduced fines for Camping Ordinance tickets. The implementation had languished in the bureaucracy for months after the Council ordered the reduction in fines. As well, we would like to commend the City Council for supporting a countywide survey of the homeless population and its needs.

The task force also helped initiate the creation of a process for the ISSP to formally notify the City when the Armory is at capacity. This may lead to periodic dismissal of Camping Ordinance citations, as is called for by the amendments to the Camping Ordinance that Council enacted last spring.

The task force has also initiated a draft advisory letter that will provide important legal information on the Camping Ordinance to homeless people, the court system and the community at large. We await feedback on the letter from the Mayor.

Interim Recommendations of the Task Force

The recommendations that follow include many that are not in their final form.

Shelter, housing and places to sleep

We recommend that the Council acknowledge that camping and vehicular sleeping will not stop because of laws. We suggest that the City move to an approach that regulates camping and vehicular sleeping, while minimizing negative impacts. Some examples of this approach include development of programs for expanding vehicular sleeping, including:

- Creation of a modest, staffed program to match vehicular sleepers with legal locations in church and business parking lots.
- Selection of legal parking areas on public streets or parking lots away from residences for overnight parking.

- Creation of a system of permits for sleeping in vehicles which is simple, free for those in need and avoids labeling anyone homeless.
- Extension of the 3-day time limit for sleeping in a vehicle parked in a driveway with permission from the permanent residents there.
- Creation of a conventionally managed public campground in the City of Santa Cruz which would exist for both tourist and homeless campers. Revenue from tourists would help to allow subsidy of very low-income campers.

We recommend that the City work toward year-round availability of the Armory with zero or low rent, recognizing that Armory-style emergency shelter has many limitations. This would begin with an emphasis on working at the state level to make it possible to use the armory year-round.

We suggest that the City work toward creation of a shelter for families with children.

We recommend that the City work toward creation of an additional shelter site for the ISSP program that would be available 24-hours a day, 365 days a year, to be used flexibly by the program to meet special needs not currently met by church and Armory sites.

We recommend that the City help create a home-matching program for homeless families and households willing to accommodate them.

Substance abuse treatment

We recommend that the City, with other entities, work to develop a new residential substance abuse treatment facility geared specifically to meet the needs of homeless persons with a history of chronic substance abuse. The recent loss of two long-time homeless residents due to the effects of substance abuse, one of whom had been seeking treatment in vain in the last days of his life, underline the desperate need for these services. The task force will be providing information on models, potential funding sources, and potential collaboration partners, and also recommendations on the preferred features of such a treatment program.

We recommend that the City work to expand opportunities for treatment with a goal of treatment on demand, so that "windows of opportunity" are not lost.

We recommend that the City work to provide a small "safe haven" drop-in shelter for those not able to enter more structured shelter programs, with tolerance for active substance users. This project would include explicit outreach to high-risk individuals.

Supportive Services

We recommend that the City help create an independent "ombudsperson" position for homeless people to receive, document and assist with complaints related to homeless services (both agencies and governmental). The person in this position would also refer homeless people to appropriate services and/or agencies and document service shortages when there is no referral available.

We recommend that the City help create a homeless persons day labor program located at the Coral Street site.

We recommend that the City help assist in the creation of a small job training and employment enterprise for homeless people.

Legal and Law Enforcement Issues

We recommend that the City work with other jurisdictions to reconcile differences between the Camping Ordinance provision related to community service for violations and existing Court practices. These differences preclude violators from performing community service for camping violations.

We wish to inform the City of our successful involvement in upgrading the hourly calculations used by the court referral program, Community Options, from five to seven dollars per hour.

We recommend that the Police Department make an effort to eliminate the appearance of selective enforcement of the "downtown ordinances" and other ordinances which are often enforced against persons who appear to be homeless but not enforced against people who appear to be well-dressed and affluent.

We recommend the Police Department adopt a consistent policy of not citing or arresting people for typically homeless-related violations when they approach the police to report violent crimes.

We recommend that the Police Department adopt a method of gathering specific data and tracking of crimes against homeless people.

We recommend revision of laws which prohibit scavenging of recyclables since this is often a source of income for homeless individuals.

The following are areas in which task force has not yet completed recommendations. We are working on, and intend to more fully examine these concerns in the remaining months:

Develop and recommend or propose a program of education and outreach to the larger community about homeless issues and needs.

Identify and recommend funding sources for additional homeless services.

Propose ways in which the City of Santa Cruz could work with other entities to increase or improve delivery of important services to homeless people.

Propose specific suggestions for revising the City's Camping Ordinance.

Propose plans for support people such as advocates and observers for homeless people who need to deal with the courts and the criminal justice systems.

Propose revisions for the "downtown ordinances."

Explore utilization of the "Downtown Mediation Report" and its suggestions for resolving conflicts between homeless people and others downtown.

The task force also recognizes the tremendous need for additional transitional, permanent, and 'very low income' housing, both to avoid displacements and to increase options for already-homeless people. We believe this is a very important issue related to homelessness; one in which the City of Santa Cruz is a crucial player. However, this task force cannot do substantive work on these matters within its remaining time. We are hoping the City will address its 1998

Mission Statement regarding homelessness by pursuing progress in establishing safe, accessible housing in every neighborhood.

Finally, we would like to note the enormous magnitude of issues contained in the assignment given to the task force. There is no way a group such as this can do justice to the assignment in a six-month period, with part-time staffing. We respectfully request that the City Council consider extending the life of this task force and creating a permanent advisory body dedicated to the hardest issues.

Respectfully submitted by:

Linda Lemaster, Chair	Ken Cole, Vice-Chair	Timote Peterson
Nancy Anecito	Paul Brindel	Christine Sippl
Sherry Conable	Peter Eberle	Marilyn Weaver
Lucy Kemnitzer	Thomas Leavitt	Mel Nunez
Don Lane, Staff Coordinator	Tom Nedelsky	Laura Tucker, Staff Assistant

Submitted by:

Linda Lemaster
Chair

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Attachments: Supplement to the Interim Report of the Homeless Issues Task Force by Lucy Kemnitzer

City of Santa Cruz Community Advisory Committee on Homeless (CACH)

Review of Past and Current Homelessness-Related Policy Recommendations: By Category

The following chart lists homelessness-related policy recommendations that have been presented to and considered by the Santa Cruz City Council over the last two decades. Some recommendations are broad ranging, involving multiple governmental and non-governmental agencies, while others are specific to the City alone. Recommendations are listed by category.

Recommendations	Timeframe	Action Taken	Considerations/Challenges
Direct Services			
Create a Homeless Persons Day Labor Program at Coral Street			
Contract for Homeless Jobs Engagement Program	July `17-present	Downtown Streets Team (DST) under contract and operating since July 2017.	**The CACH may elect to invite the DST team to present on their program and results.**
Explore a Day Center with Basic Services and Case Management		The RSC was originally opened in Feb. `18 as Phase I of a three phased plan to create a Day Center. Efforts on Phase 2 did not yield a feasible solution for siting	Siting for the continued operation of the RSC with expansion to a Day Center is needed by Jan. 2020. **The CACH may elect to focus on siting and program modeling for shelter services.**
Increase Outreach Services and Mobile Behavioral Health/Mental Health Response		Through County contract, added one Downtown Outreach Worker for a total of two, providing 7-day-a-week, 10-hour-per-day coverage (overlap on Wednesday). Through County contract, added one Mental Health Liaison, for a total of two liaisons who partner with SCPD. PACT redesign/HOPES Team approved by the City Council on January 9, 2018, with implementation in the spring.	**The CACH may elect to be educated on current outreach services available in the City.**
Create Triage Location/Expanded Recovery Center for Crisis Intervention	FY `18	City committed $40,000 in funding for FY 2018 for the County operated Sobering Center. In January 2018, the Center began accepting both alcohol and drug related arrests for sobering.	**Access to substance use disorder treatment serves as a bottleneck in our community due to limited bed space. The CACH may elect to be educated on this subject.**
Secure Storage Facilities	March `19	The City allocated $5000 to support Day/Night Storage. RSC offers storage to individuals staying on site.	**More storage resources are needed and the CACH may elect to tackle this issue as a priority.**
Secure Hygiene Resources: Restrooms and Showers	FY `18 & `19	The City provides funding support ($30K) to the Homeless Services Center to add 15 hours per week in drop-in access to bathrooms, showers and laundry. As needed, the City provides temporary hygiene and hand washing stations in areas of concentrated need.	**Existing hygiene resources do not meet current demand and the CACH may elect to tackle this issue as a priority.**
Fund Homeward Bound	FY `19 & `19	Funded at $25,000 in FY 2018 and $35,000 for FY 2019.	

		Expanded access to program to Rangers and Downtown Outreach Workers.	
Secure Electronic Device Charging Resources		Currently available in 10 library branches countywide	
Sheltering and Housing			
Increase Local Shelter Options	Feb–Nov `18	The City opened and operated the 1220 River Street Camp (RSC)	Due to unsuccessful attempt to find an alternate location of the camp, the camp was closed.
	Jan `19-present	Winter Shelter is expanded to include Laurel St., in addition to VFW, both sites operated by Salvation Army	VFW shelter was closed due to facility availability, Laurel Street capacity was increased to accommodate need. VFW will open again Nov. `19-March `20. Laurel is currently at capacity. **The CACH may elect to weigh in on effective program modeling for emergency shelter in our community.**
	May `19-present	1220 RSC is reopened, this time operated by Salvation Army with a projected closure date of March `20	The River Camp site will close in March of `20 to accommodate a water infrastructure project. A new site must be found. The RSC is current at capacity. **The CACH needs to weigh in on and develop siting recommendations for the RSC transition no later than January 2020.**
	June `19	Winter Shelter is extended to run year round	Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) funds, received in Feb. `19 from the state to the Continuum of Care administered by the County, are used to extend the Winter Shelter program.
Establish Ordinance Language for Transitional Encampments	Feb - March `19	Council moved on March 12, 2019 to table discussion on transitional encampment and safe parking ordinance amendments until that subject is contemplated in the project charter scope.	The transitional encampment project charter focuses on reaching community consensus on the program model and siting of transitional encampments in our community. **This work was delegated by the Council to CACH.**
Identify Site Location for Transitional Encampment or Safe Sleeping Site	March `19	Staff presented Council with a list of possible locations to site a sanctioned encampment	**The CACH may elect to include program modeling considerations for safe sleeping and sanctioned encampment siting in their work plan.**
Design and Implement a Small Scale Safe Sleeping and Storage Program	March `19	Design of this program was started, but implementation was halted due to lack of support by community/neighborhoods.	Due to the rush to find a solution to the health and safety issues posed by the Gateway/Ross unsanctioned encampment, policies were pushed upon the community without sufficient (if any) outreach/engagement. **The CACH may elect to include program modeling considerations for safe sleeping and sanctioned encampment siting in their work plan.**
Consider San Francisco		Along with the County and other HAP jurisdictions, the City	HEAP funds were put towards implementation of

Navigation Center Shelter Model (full-service, low-barrier, year-round shelter)		has been pursuing a navigation center model for two years.	Navigation Centers in both north and south counties.
Pursue Permanent, Regional, Year-Round Homeless Shelter			
Cultivate Development of Housing	June `18-present	The SC Council adopted the Council Housing Blueprint subcommittee's implementation recommendations on June 12, 2018, and staff, as directed, have been bringing back implementing policy	
Create Safe Sleeping Zones			
Expand Winter Shelter Access	June `19	See extension of Winter Shelter above	
Legislation/Advocacy			
Declare Shelter Crisis	Jan 2018	City Council declares a Shelter Crisis in the City of Santa Cruz under California Government Code Section 8698 et. al. to facilitate the sheltering plan.	This declaration made the City eligible for state funding.
Explore Potential of No Place Like Home Legislation (AB 1618)			**The CACH may elect to study current legislation at the state and federal level.**
Develop Revenue Source for Housing		The availability of State funding through the California Emergency Solutions and Housing (CESH) Program and Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) countywide presents a pivotal opportunity for investment in homelessness and housing support. However, this funding is not for housing, rather homelessness.	HEAP and CESH funds are allocated to the County and distributed via the Homeless Action Partnership (HAP). The City is not guaranteed access to this funding source. **The CACH may elect to study current legislation at the state and federal level to fund housing.**
Coordinate State Advocacy with Other High-Ratio Homeless Communities			
Engage Federal Representatives on Homelessness and Mental Illness Needs			
Systems Improvements			
Create Independent Homelessness "Ombudsperson" Position			
Support Coordinated Entry	Summer `18-present	The first phase of Coordinated Entry within County and service agencies launched summer 2018, with subsequent phases to roll out over the next two years.	The County's Human Services Department administers Coordinated Entry. Process improvement steps are being taken continuously. **The CACH may elect to be educated on Coordinated Entry to understand its opportunities and constraints.**
Create a 2x2 Committee with	Sept `17-	Committee was formed in September 2017.	

County of Santa Cruz	present		
Engage in Strategic Planning with Homeless Services Center, County and other Service Partners	Ongoing	The City works closely and continuously with the County and service providers, cultivating productive partnerships to develop actionable strategies.	**The CACH may elect to consider and engagement plan with the community on current strategic planning efforts.**
Improve City Internal Coordination System and Protocols; Ensure Training and Support for Employees		SC Police Department training provided continuously, as requested, for staff and community members. The City has launched an internal coordinating committee to focus on homelessness issues.	
Create Homelessness Information and Resources Page on City Website		www.cityofsantacruz.com/community/homelessness	
Municipal Code/Ordinances			
Revision of Laws Which Prohibit Scavenging of Recyclables			
Halt Creation of Additional Parking Restrictions			
Adapt a Method of Gathering Specific Data and Tracking of Crimes Against Homeless Individuals			
Adopt a Policy of Not Citing People for Homeless-Related Violations When They Approach the Police to Report Violent Crimes			
Repeal of the Camping Ordinance	April 9, `19	Council motion carried to suspend enforcement of SCMC Ch. 6.36 – Camping against homeless individuals pending an amendment that is consistent with the 9th Circuit's decision in *Martin v. Boise*.	**New/revised camping ordinance must be written and the CACH may elect to provide engagement opportunities and policy direction on this topic.**
Establish a Living Wage Ordinance			

Community Advisory Committee on Homelessness (CACH)
BYLAWS

Article I.   Purpose of Committee

The Committee's purpose is to review current and previous City of Santa Cruz homelessness-related recommendations and policies; research best practices; identify current efforts related to homelessness and their effects on the community and people experiencing homelessness themselves; engage with the community; identify priorities; and make recommendations to the City Council.

Article II.   Authority and Establishment of the Committee

The Committee was established by Santa Cruz City Council on June 25, 2019 and was seated on July 30ᵗʰ, 2019. The Committee is subject to the Brown Act and all other applicable law. The Committee is established for 9 months from the time of the first meeting, with extensions allowed with Council approval.

Article III.   Organization of the Committee

(a) Committee Composition

(i) The Committee starts work with the following thirteen members (membership has been updated as of Feb. 4, 2020):

Ami Chen Mills-Naim	~~Frank Sanchez~~
Candice Elliott	Rafael Sonnenfeld
Serg Kagno	Dwaine Tait
Don Lane	~~Ingrid Trejo~~
Taj Leahy	~~Katie Woolsey~~
Stina Roach	Stoney Brook
Brooke Newman	Alie Soares
Aran Nichol	Evan Morrison

(b) Committee member withdrawal

i. Members may withdraw from the Committee at any time by providing a letter of resignation to the Council, with copies to City staff to be distributed to the other Members.

ii.   Members may have no more than 3 unexcused absences or 5 absences total absences during the timeline established in Article II. If a Member has more than 5 absences total, they forfeit their membership. Participation by conference call is not considered an absence, must be approved by a Co-Chair in advance, and is not preferred.

(c) Convener

The Committee shall appoint a Convener to facilitate Committee meetings. The Convener has no motion authority, will not be a voting member, and serves at the pleasure of the Committee. The Convener's role is to oversee the meeting process and help provide structure and adherence to parliamentary norms. The Committee may elect to caucus to provide opportunities for informal conversations and dialog. In the absence of the Convener, the Co-Chairs will facilitate the meeting.

(d) Co-Chairs

The Committee shall elect 2 Committee members as Co-Chairs. Their responsibilities shall include: shaping meeting agendas and serving as spokespeople when communicating with the City Council at the direction of the Committee. The Co-Chairs are the point of contact to represent the will of the Committee with City staff in the event of a media request. Individual Committee members retain the right to speak on their own behalf as a member of the Committee.

(e) Quorum

A meeting or any business activity of more than half of the current membership of the Committee must be conducted in public per the Brown Act. Committee meeting will be considered to have sufficient members present to convene if there are one more than a simple majority of the current membership at the meeting.

Article IV. Roles and Communications

(a) Committee-City Council

(i) The Committee may invite Councilmembers to meetings from time to time. The Committee appreciates if Councilmembers would not speak or actively participate in Committee meetings unless input is specifically requested by the Committee.

(ii) The Committee will communicate with the City Council by e-mail, letter or written report which may be accompanied by an oral communication as authorized by the Committee.

(iii) Reasons for the Committee to report to the Council include:

1) To provide updates on status of work;

2) To make recommendations based on Committee review; and

3) Individual Committee Members may communicate personally with Council members, within the constraints of the Brown Act. Individual Committee Members who communicate personally with Councilmembers, or at City Council meeting, will only do so on their own behalf. They will not represent the Committee unless authorized by the Committee.

(b) Committee Member - Committee Members

(i) Collaboration with an open outlook: Members will at all times keep to their commitment to the City that they will participate collaboratively and maintain an outlook that is open to new information and new outcomes. If the Committee members experience interpersonal conflict that may threaten the collaboration process toward the goals of the CACH, medication may be used.

(c) Committee-Public

(i) Members may engage with the public to describe their experience as Members of the Committee, the information that they have learned, or any changes to their perspectives.

(ii) Members will always make it clear when they speak or write in public that they speak for themselves, and not as a spokesperson for the Committee unless expressly directed to perform that duty by the Committee.

(d) City Staff
City staff shall:

(i) Support the Committee's work by ensuring that appropriate resources are made available to the Committee in a timely manner, in consultation with the Co-Chairs.

(ii) Offer suggestions and recommendations in a collaborative manner with the Committee.

Article V.   Work Plan

The Committee will agree on a work plan. This will include an early agreement about the form of the work product and timeline for reports and recommendations to the public and/or City Council.

Article VI. Decision-making process

(a) General Decision Process

The Committee's decision-making processes will differ from the Council or City Commissions in that it is intended to reach consensus through a collaborative process (See glossary.) Therefore, the Committee will use this hierarchy of decision tools:

    (i)   The preferred decision tool is for the Committee to arrive at a "sense of the meeting."

    (ii) Consensus is highly desirable.

    (iii) Informal voting may only be used to explore the decision space.

    (iv) Formal voting may be used as a fallback when consensus fails. Passage of a motion shall require a 2/3 majority of the members present and voting.

    (v) Mediation may be used in the event that the Committee, utilizing the agreed-upon General Decision-making Process as stipulated in Article VI a (i-iv), reaches impasse.

Article VII. Meeting Procedures

(a) Committee Meetings will occur at least monthly or as agreed upon by the Committee. Subcommittees may meet more often and if desired have city staff support when available.

    (i) Committee members who cannot attend should notify the Co-Chairs and City staff in advance.

(b) The meeting times shall be posted on the Committee's website and shall be given public notice similar to City Council meetings through e-mail notification, and notification shall be sent on the same timeline to homeless service providers, nonprofit, faith-based, and community organizations, within the City.

(c) City staff will coordinate meeting materials.

    (i) assemble the agenda with the Co-Chairs, and post the agenda 5 days in advance of any public meeting of the Committee, when feasible,

(ii) ensure that the agenda is posted on the Committee website, shared on an e-mail notification system, and shared with the same organizations noted in Article VII (b)

(iii) maintain action-only meeting minutes for the Committee's review at the following meeting. Staff shall have projector available to show real time motions and amendments for Committee Members to see and vote on, and will ensure that there is a call-in number for Committee Members who are unable to attend in-person.

(iv) meeting minutes will include an ongoing record of attendance, including Committee Members and those members of the public who choose to identify themselves.

(d) Involvement of the Public in Meetings

Each session will include an opportunity for public comment/oral communications regarding Committee-related matters with time allotted to comment decided by Committee vote. The Committee recognizes the need to accommodate members of the public that may have limited time and access to meetings and thereby will provide opportunities to comment at the beginning and end of each meeting.

Glossary

Action only minutes: these are the minutes that show the actual decisions and forward actions.

Consensus: consent of all the parties. Consensus can include "standing aside," in which one or more parties can say "I am not going to block this, but I am willing to let it go. However, I want my non-agreement to be noted."

Sense of the Meeting: After discussing an issue, often at some length, there is a palpable feeling in the room that a wise and stable decision has been reached the facilitator or Co-Chair will confirm with the group that a sense of the meeting has been achieved.

Santa Cruz County
Homeless System Baseline Assessment Report

Prepared for Santa Cruz County
by Focus Strategies

August 2019

Santa Cruz County Baseline System Assessment
Prepared by Focus Strategies for Santa Cruz County

August 2019

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Executive Summary

The County of Santa Cruz has engaged Focus Strategies to assist community leadership and key stakeholders to evaluate, align, and improve the countywide response to the local crisis of homelessness. This report is the *first step* in a phased technical assistance project that will ultimately result in a design for a coordinated systemwide response to homelessness and an action plan to implement it. The purpose of this initial assessment is to describe current efforts to address homelessness in Santa Cruz County, identify strengths and gaps of the current approach, and make some *interim* recommendations for steps the community can take to improve its response to homelessness in the short-term, including recommendations related to system governance. This initial baseline assessment draws primarily upon qualitative data, collected through review of local documents, available data, and a thorough stakeholder engagement process, including in-person and by-phone interviews with key stakeholders, community engagement meetings, and focus groups.

Following this baseline assessment, Focus Strategies will conduct additional work to reach a more complete understanding of the existing homeless system in Santa Cruz county and assist the community in moving to a more effective response to homelessness. Drawing upon local data, Focus Strategies will conduct a quantitative systemwide analysis to understand local homeless system performance at the project and overall system level using our System-Wide Analytics and Projection (SWAP) suite of tools. The SWAP analysis, which is already in progress, will measure the results the current system is achieving and inform the development of strategies to improve performance results through predictive modeling. Focus Strategies will engage stakeholders in a discussion of the SWAP results and a collaborative process to develop a new homeless system design that is data-informed. The final product of our work in Santa Cruz will be an actionable plan to implement a more coordinated, community-wide and systematic response to homelessness, to be delivered by April 2020. The following graphic shows the general flow and projected timeline of each phase, including this baseline assessment, that comprise Focus Strategies' engagement with Santa Cruz County.

START

Stakeholder Engagement & Baseline Assessment Research Conducted	Baseline Assessment Report & Short-Term Action Plan Issued	System and Project Performance Analysis (SWAP) Completed	Short Term Action Plan Steps Completed	Governance Structure & Draft System Design Completed	Action Plan Issued	New Homeless Response System Implemented/ Ongoing Evaluation and Adjustment
March 2019	August 2019	November 2019	December 2019	February 2020	April 2020	

However, forward movement to improving the community's response does not have to wait until all the technical assistance is completed. Focus Strategies has also developed a Short-Term Action Plan as a companion to this baseline assessment. The Short-Term Action Plan lays out our recommended steps for implementation of the interim recommendations in this report, including suggested activities, timelines, and lead entities. Based on the community's needs, Focus Strategies will provide technical assistance to support implementation of the interim recommendations as part of this broader project. Currently planned implementation technical assistance includes:

- Develop and facilitate implementation and learning collaboratives with key community stakeholders to advance interim recommendations from this report, or to support other learning objectives (beginning in September 2019); and

- Design and lead meetings with the reconvened Homeless Governance Study Committee to reach an agreement on revised governance, planning, funding, and implementation structure (also beginning in September 2019).

<u>Assessment Findings</u>

Overall, Focus Strategies' baseline assessment has found that the Santa Cruz community has a significant homeless problem relative to its population. Funding, functioning, and the size of the homeless crisis response system are not at the scale or level of alignment and coordination needed to begin to reverse current trends. However, many essential system elements are in place and function fairly well, giving local stakeholders a good foundation to build upon. System strengths include a range of emergency responses (outreach, emergency shelter and services) that respond to the basic needs of people experiencing homelessness and, in some cases, operate with strong housing-focused intention. Rapid re-housing inventory is increasing. Permanent housing interventions targeted to people experiencing homeless are few but seem to be relatively well designed and targeted. Coordinated entry for most system resources is established and largely accepted within the community and has led to improvements in the availability of data on people experiencing homelessness. The Homeless Action Partnership (HAP) is recognized as a valuable forum for stakeholders to engage in dialogue on homelessness and has been successful in its role as coordinator of HUD Continuum of Care (CoC) mandated data gathering and planning. There is a strong track record of collaboration between stakeholders.

A few key programmatic pieces are missing or underdeveloped in the current approach. Most notably, the community lacks a strong and fully integrated diversion/problem-solving practice that deploys problem-solving as an important tool to be used at multiple touchpoints in the community. Diversion/problem-solving is an intervention that can work with people seeking assistance to help some identify immediate housing alternatives and reduce the inflow of people into homelessness. Other programmatic areas that could be strengthened are shelter and outreach; which could be more strongly coordinated and enhanced with housing-focused strategies, training, and resources.

At the system level, well-informed members of the community actively participate in efforts to reduce homelessness and many examples of successful coordination exist. However, robust system-wide alignment around priorities and goals, capacity for data-driven decision making, and a more refined and empowered governance and implementation structure are needed. This aligned system will also need increased staffing capacity to support the system structure and see goals to fruition. Without these elements in place Santa Cruz cannot be said to have a fully realized homeless crisis response system in which all the parts work together toward a common set of measurable goals. And without such a system, progress on reducing homelessness will remain elusive.

<u>Next Steps and Interim Recommendations</u>

In the next phase of this technical assistance project, underway beginning in July 2019, Focus Strategies will prepare a quantitative analysis of homeless system performance using our Systemwide Analytics and Prediction (SWAP) suite of tools. Over the next several months, Focus Strategies will engage the community in a process of preparing, reviewing, and understanding the SWAP results, conduct predictive modeling, and develop data-informed strategies to re-design and improve the overall community response to homelessness.

The upcoming SWAP analysis and data-driven system planning will result in a long-term strategy and action plan to establish an effective, coordinated system to reduce homelessness. In the shorter-term, however, the community can move forward with system improvement efforts even as this longer-term work is underway. While the next phase of analytic and system re-design work is taking place, this baseline report provides the community with initial suggestions about recommended key strategies that may be developed and implemented *immediately* to help jump-start improvements to the homeless crisis response.

Suggested short-term system improvements are:

1. *Implement a Systemwide Diversion Practice to Reduce Inflow*. To begin reducing the numbers of people entering homelessness, we advise fast-tracking existing plans to launch diversion and scale up these efforts as rapidly and at as many appropriate service locations as possible. Diversion provides practical support and, in some cases, small amounts of flexible funding to people who are experiencing homelessness to help them self-identify a housing solution, such as moving in with a friend, finding a shared housing situation, or returning to family. Standing up a community-wide diversion practice will require regular and ongoing training, as well as peer-to-peer learning (such as a learning collaborative) and a method for collecting data on diversion to track impact. Improvements to the Coordinated Entry System (CES), aligned with the diversion approach, can also help reduce inflow.

2. *Build Capacity of Emergency Shelters to Deliver Housing-Focused Services and Supports*. Our assessment shows that the existing shelter providers in the community are already taking steps to integrate services that help residents move from shelter to housing. While the community is working to establish new navigation centers, building the capacity of existing shelters to provide more housing-focused services and supports would yield immediate impact. We recommend convening a working group of shelter providers and funders to identify elements that are working well and those that can be expanded or improved to increase the rate at which people leave emergency shelters for housing.

3. *Coordinate and Standardize Outreach Efforts:* In Santa Cruz county, several entities conduct outreach to unsheltered people; however, there is currently no formal coordination of these efforts, agreed upon goals, shared protocols, consistent data collection, or common outcome measures. Over the long-term, the Santa Cruz community needs a proactive strategy for addressing unsheltered homelessness and encampments as part of the creation of a systematic response to homelessness. This will be a significant undertaking that requires an updated

governance and implementation structure to be successful. In the interim, we recommend that stakeholders begin working immediately on coordination and alignment of outreach efforts – bringing the different outreach teams and their funders together to develop agreements on a shared approach, purpose, outcomes, and geographic coverage. Ensuring that outreach is efficiently deployed and connected to the rest of the system will help prepare the way toward a more comprehensive approach to unsheltered homelessness.

Governance Recommendations:

Focus Strategies has reviewed the work of the Homeless Governance Study Committee convened by the County (CAO) in 2017-2018. This group made great strides toward developing a revised Governance structure based on the existing HAP that we believe it is important for the community to complete and implement. The recommendations from that effort propose a workable structure that could act as a backbone for a new system approach. However, key questions about its authority, relationship to other entities, and how it will make and communicate decisions remain to be answered. We recommend that this group be reconvened," with the County CAO's office continuing to serve as the convener, while bringing in Focus Strategies to develop agendas, facilitate the discussions, and help guide the group to a final set of recommendations.

This process will answer critical questions about how the revised structure will operate, what purview it will have, and what resources and efforts it will jointly oversee. We recommend a series of four to five meetings between September and November 2019. Focus Strategies will design and facilitate a set of agendas to address specific topics, building from each meeting to arrive at agreement on a new governing structure, how it will function and make decisions, what specific funding sources it will oversee or coordinate/align, and how it will communicate decisions to the larger membership and the public. The meetings will focus on fleshing out and documenting how the new structure will accomplish key system planning functions; particularly: (1) setting strategic direction and priorities, (2) aligning funding to advance identified priorities, (3) creating a structure for public and private funders to work together, (4) ensuring the new structure complies with Federal requirements for Continuums of Care (CoC), and (5) building in communication protocols to ensure transparency. The end result of this reconvened governance process will be agreement on the new structure, including protocols and procedures for the items noted above. Focus Strategies will document the agreements in a written governance proposal to be presented to and approved by all relevant decision-making bodies (e.g. HAP, BOS, city councils, others).

Conclusion

This baseline assessment identifies some significant strengths in the existing homeless response in Santa Cruz County, including strong collaborative relationships, a broad array of necessary programs and services for people experiencing homelessness, and a desire to improve overall coordination of efforts toward a shared strategic direction. Focus Strategies has recommended some areas for immediate action to begin filling some of the identified gaps while we move into the next phase of deeper data analysis, modeling, and community engagement to develop long-term strategies and an action plan for a coordinated, systematic community response to homelessness. Steps for implementing the interim recommendations are laid out in a companion Short-Term Action Plan.

I. Background and Purpose

The County of Santa Cruz has engaged Focus Strategies to assist community leadership and key stakeholders to evaluate, align, and improve the countywide response to the local homelessness crisis. As a first step in this process, Focus Strategies has conducted this initial baseline assessment of the state of homelessness in Santa Cruz County and the effectiveness of the community's response. The baseline assessment primarily draws upon qualitative information gathered from a review of available documents and a wide range of individual interviews and group engagements with key stakeholders. The purpose of this assessment is to describe current efforts to address homelessness in Santa Cruz County, identify strengths and gaps of the current approach, and make some recommendations for *interim* steps the community can take to improve its response to homelessness in the short-term, including recommendations related to system governance. This assessment also lays the groundwork for the next phases of Focus Strategies' technical assistance, in which we will engage the community in a deeper dive into system performance measurement and system planning.

As a companion to this initial baseline assessment, Focus Strategies has also produced a suggested set of action steps that the community can take to implement the interim recommendations over the next several months (August to December 2019), with our technical assistance. The Short-Term Action Plan also details the next steps in the broader system assessment and redesign that Focus Strategies will be undertaking in collaboration with community stakeholders, which include:

- System Performance and Predictive Modeling (July 2019 to February 2020): Focus Strategies has already begun the next phase of this technical assistance, which is a quantitative analysis of homeless system performance using our Systemwide Analytics and Prediction (SWAP) suite of tools. SWAP uses the community's local data (from the local Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and other sources) to develop an assessment of performance on key outcomes at the project and system levels and model the impact of system changes. These performance outcomes include the rate at which people experiencing homelessness are rehoused and whether they become homeless again, as well as other key outcomes that assess the how well the system targets its resources to those with the highest needs and longest histories of homelessness.

- Homeless System Design (August to December 2019): In parallel with the data analysis work described above, Focus Strategies will engage the community in a process to envision and design a fully-realized homeless crisis response system. The ultimate goal is for Santa Cruz County to move from having a collection of coordinated but still largely independent programs and projects serving people who experience homelessness to an aligned homeless crisis response *system* in which all the individual efforts work together to advance a shared set of clear objectives. Across each part of the system, roles and connections are clearly defined, and each player maintains shared accountability for results of the entire system. All stakeholders in the system work towards the common goal of assisting all people to exit homelessness into permanent housing, prioritizing those with the highest needs for homeless system resources. The system also works towards making homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring, per the goals of *Home, Together,* the federal strategic plan to end homelessness.

Technical assistance Focus Strategies will provide to guide the system design include:

- o Presentations and discussion of this Baseline Assessment Report including the interim recommendations (August-September 2019)
- o Formation and launch of one or more Implementation and Learning Collaboratives facilitated by Focus Strategies to support implementation of Interim Recommendations, and foster system-wide learning and improvement, as detailed in the Short-Term Action Plan (September-December 2019)
- o Restarting the Homeless Governance Study Committee and reaching agreement on a new governance, funding, planning and implementation structure, as detailed in Short-Term Action Plan (September to December 2019)
- o Presentations and discussion of the SWAP system performance and modeling results (November - December 2019) to develop a homeless crisis response system design that is strategic and data-informed
- o Development of a recommended Administrative Structure (staffing plan) for the proposed system (November-December 2019)

- Action Plan Development (January to April 2020): Creating an actionable plan to implement the homeless crisis response system that the community has designed.

II. Information Sources and Methodology

The purpose of this assessment is to determine the strengths and challenges of the existing community response to homelessness and begin identifying strategies for improvement. In conducting this assessment, our "north star" is a fully realized "homeless crisis response system" that efficiently supports people who are experiencing homelessness to secure housing as quickly as possible and avoid returning to homelessness. A homeless crisis response system manages the "flow" of people from homelessness into housing using a consistent, communitywide strategy in which all the programs and services are aligned to common objectives. Section IV provides an explanation of the features of a homeless crisis response system and how it manages system flow in such a way that the community can measurably reduce the numbers of people experiencing homelessness.

To inform the findings and recommendations of this baseline assessment, Focus Strategies gathered and reviewed information from the following sources:

- Phone interviews with more than 20 key stakeholders representing different sectors, including local government staff, philanthropic funders, non-profit housing and service providers, advocates, and others. A complete list of interviewees and the agencies they represent is included as Appendix A;

- In-person meetings with representatives from the County of Santa Cruz, cities of Santa Cruz, Watsonville and Capitola, the Homeless Action Partnership (HAP), housing and service providers in both North and South County, two focus groups held with people with lived experience of homelessness, and site visits to two provider agencies (Homeless Service Center and Salvation

Army). A complete list of meetings attended and facilitated by Focus Strategies staff with key Santa Cruz County stakeholders is included as Appendix B;

- Review of local reports and other documents regarding system planning, governance, funding and allocations, previous evaluations and analyses, and performance reports. Documents reviewed as part of this assessment are listed in Appendix C; and

- Review of available data on homelessness in Santa Cruz county, including the Housing Inventory Count (HIC), Point in Time (PIT) Count, and Santa Cruz' results on HUD's System Performance Measures. These are standard reports that HUD requires from each Continuum of Care and are prepared in Santa Cruz by the staff and consultants that support the Homeless Action Partnership (HAP). Focus Strategies reviewed HIC and PIT data from 2015 to 2019 and system performance measures from 2017 and 2018. Data reviewed as part of this assessment are listed in Appendix D.

III. Community Context: Homelessness in Santa Cruz County

A. Numbers and Characteristics of People Experiencing Homelessness in Santa Cruz County

The most recent annual Homeless Point in Time Count in Santa Cruz County, conducted in January 2019, found 2,167 people experiencing homelessness on any given night. These 2,167 people were part of 1,440 distinct households experiencing homelessness. Around 78% were unsheltered (living outdoors, in cars, and other places not meant for human habitation). According to local stakeholders, most of these individuals are living in encampments, primarily concentrated in the City of Santa Cruz. The remaining population was staying emergency shelter (15.5%) or transitional housing (6%) on the night of the count.

The PIT data shows that most of the homeless population in the community is comprised of single adult households, at around 89%. Only 8% of the population counted in 2019 were members of families with children. Santa Cruz County is also home to large number of transition aged youth (TAY) - defined as those who are age 18 to 24. In the 2019 count, youth ages 18 to 24 comprised around 27.5% of Santa Cruz' homeless population while unaccompanied children (under age 18) comprised 2.3% of the population (around 30% total). Santa Cruz is known as a tourist destination, as well as a beach and surfing community. Some local stakeholders believe that among new arrivals to Santa Cruz County are some persons who are experiencing homelessness; however, the PIT count shows that a majority of those experiencing homelessness were residents of Santa Cruz County before they became homeless.

Total People Experiencing Homelessness in Santa Cruz County in 2019

| | Sheltered | | Unsheltered | TOTAL |
All persons	Emergency	Transitional		
Number of Children (unaccompanied)	24	1	26	51
Number of Children (with families)	79	37	133	249
Number of TAY (age 18 to 24)	13	4	577	594
Number of Adults (over age 24)	221	88	964	1,273
TOTAL PERSONS	337	130	1,700	2,167

Total Households Experiencing Homelessness in Santa Cruz County in 2019

All Households	Sheltered		Unsheltered	TOTAL
	Emergency	Transitional		
Number of Single Adult Households	183	61	1,036	1,280
Number of Children Only Households[1]	17	1	20	38
Number of Families w/Children	42	21	59	122
TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	242	83	1,115	1,440

The table below presents the numbers of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness in Santa Cruz County by jurisdiction, based on Point in Count data from 2017 provided by Applied Survey Research.[2] As shown, around half of the total unsheltered population were found in the City of Santa Cruz. The unincorporated areas of the County are home to around 27% of the total unsheltered population. The City of Watsonville follows with 19% of the total unsheltered population.

Total Unsheltered Persons by Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction	Unsheltered in 2017	Percent of Unsheltered Population
Total Incorporated	1,314	73%
City of Capitola	21	1.1%
City of Santa Cruz	934	51.9%
City of Scotts Valley	19	1%
City of Watsonville	340	18.9%
Total Unincorporated Confidential Scattered Site	485	27%

2019 Homeless Subpopulations[3]				
	Sheltered	Unsheltered	TOTAL	Percent of Total Population
Chronically Homeless Individuals	123	280	403	18.6%
Persons in CH Families	32	17	49	2.3%
Veterans	23	128	151	7%
Severely Mentally Ill	71	249	320	14.8%
Chronic Substance Abuse	32	249	281	13%
Persons with HIV/AIDS	5	24	29	1.3%
Victims of Domestic Violence	20	59	79	3.6%

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[1] "Children Only Households" is defined as a household in which everyone is under the age of 18. It is not the same as a household composed of transition age youth (TAY).
[2] Data on the geographic breakdown of the 2019 PIT Count is not yet available.
[3] Subpopulation categories are not mutually exclusive, so these figures do not sum to the total homeless population. People may be represented in multiple categories.

In addition to a large proportion of single adults, the data shows that 403 of these individuals met the federal definition of chronic homelessness (18.5% of the total population).[4] Forty-nine people in family households were also chronically homeless, per the HUD definition. As shown in the following section ("Trends in Recent Years"), this represents a significant reduction in the total number of people experiencing chronic homelessness in recent years.

A significant concern raised throughout our stakeholder engagement process was the perceived prominence of behavioral health challenges (mental illness and/or substance use disorder) among the population of people experiencing homelessness in Santa Cruz county. The 2019 PIT data shows around 15% of people self-reported that they had a severe mental illness while 13% report they experienced chronic substance abuse. While it should be noted that local PIT data is based on individuals voluntarily disclosing any disabling conditions and may thus underestimate the prevalence of these issues, the rates of behavioral health issues reported in the Santa Cruz county PIT is comparable to that of surrounding communities.[5]
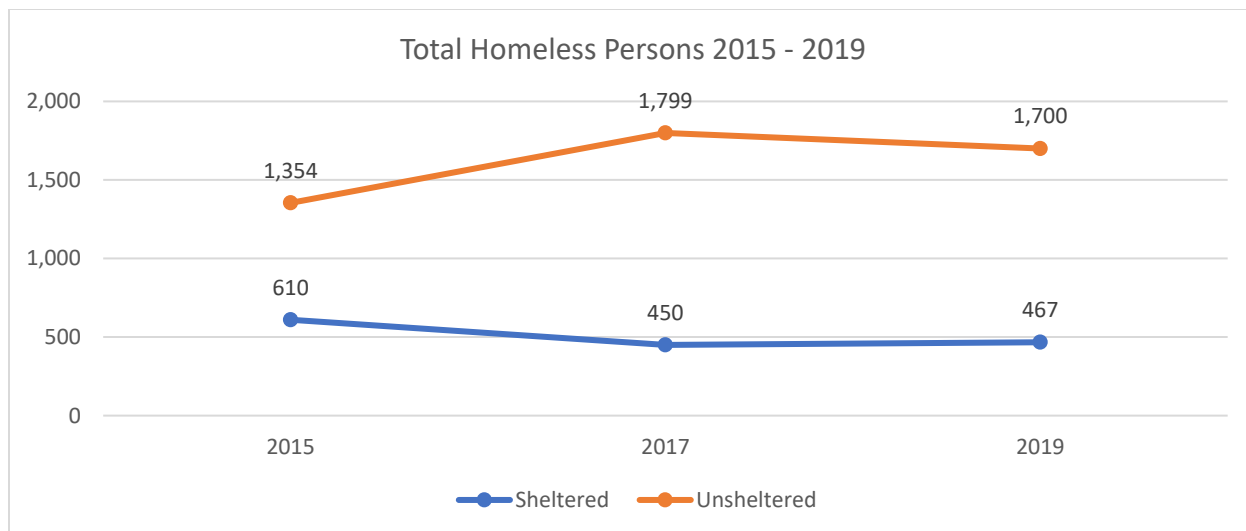
B.   Trends in Recent Years

Over the past four years, Santa Cruz County has seen an overall growth in the total number of people experiencing homelessness – from a reported 1,960 people in 2015 to 2,167 people in 2019 (a 10% increase). The community did, however, experience an upsurge in homelessness in 2017 (a 33% increase in unsheltered homelessness and 14.5% increase in total homelessness), followed by a slight decrease in 2019. Stakeholders of all types who participated in interviews and other engagements with Focus Strategies continually reported that the prominence and visibility of homelessness in the County has grown in recent years. Many believe that the rate of unsheltered homelessness has simultaneously skyrocketed. However, recent PIT data in fact shows slight decreases in the total and unsheltered population over the past two years, as shown in the following graph. Between 2017 and 2019, unsheltered homelessness decreased by 5.5% with overall homelessness down 4%. At the same time, neighboring Bay Area communities with similar high-cost, low vacancy housing markets to Santa Cruz County have experienced major growth in overall and unsheltered homelessness. Santa Clara County saw a 31% increase in homelessness in the last two years, while Alameda County had a 43% increase and homelessness in San Francisco rose 17%.[6]

The following graphs show additional trends in homelessness in Santa Cruz County among various subpopulations from 2015 to 2019. It should be noted that these trends are based on PIT data, which, due to complexities of homelessness and PIT methodology, provide only a limited understanding of population dynamics.

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[4] Chronic homelessness is defined as having a disabling condition and more than a year of continuous homelessness, or 4 episodes over the past 3 years totaling to a year or more of homelessness.
[5] In 2018 PIT Counts (the most recent year for which all data is available), Santa Clara County reported 21% of people with SMI and 24% with CSA; San Mateo County 19% SMI and 10% CSA, Monterey County 16% SMI and 18% CSA, Alameda County 27% SMI and 16% CSA.
[6] https://www.apnews.com/41b8393c7a434695985cde2a9852e786

Total Homeless Persons 2015 - 2019

As previously mentioned, in recent years, Santa Cruz County has achieved progress towards reducing the number of people experiencing chronic homelessness. The graph below demonstrates the number of people who met the federal definition of chronically homeless from 2015 to 2019. Individuals or households are considered chronically homeless by HUD's definition if they have been experiencing homelessness for one year continuously or four times in the past three years, and an adult in the household has a disabling condition.[7] The graph shows dramatic reductions in overall chronic homelessness (33% reduction) and significant reductions in the rate of chronically homeless individuals who were living in unsheltered situations (46%) in the past two years. Chronic homelessness dropped around 21% over the entire four-year time period. The number of people who were identified as chronically homeless living in sheltered situations declined steeply between 2015 and 2017 but has since risen to close to 2015 levels.

Chronically Homeless Individuals 2015 - 2019
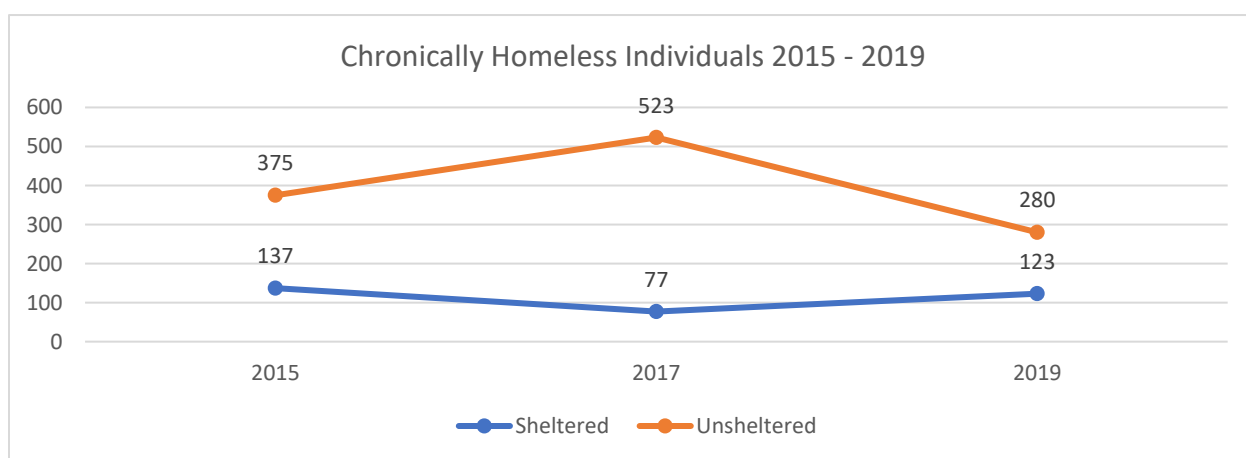
Additionally, during our interviews, community members reported that the community has made great strides towards ending homelessness amongst Veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces. Recent PIT data supports this perception, showing that Veteran homelessness was reduced by almost 40% between 2017

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[7] https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Defining-Chronically-Homeless-Final-Rule.pdf

and 2019, though it is still more than two-and-a-half times higher than reported in 2015. Unsheltered homelessness among Veterans also fell around 41% over those two years. Stakeholders attributed these recent reductions in Veteran homelessness to significant and effective housing resources from the VA and HUD targeted towards the subpopulation, as well as highly competent Veteran-focused providers in the community. (See Section V for more on the community's efforts to reduce Veteran homelessness).

Homeless Veterans 2015 - 2019
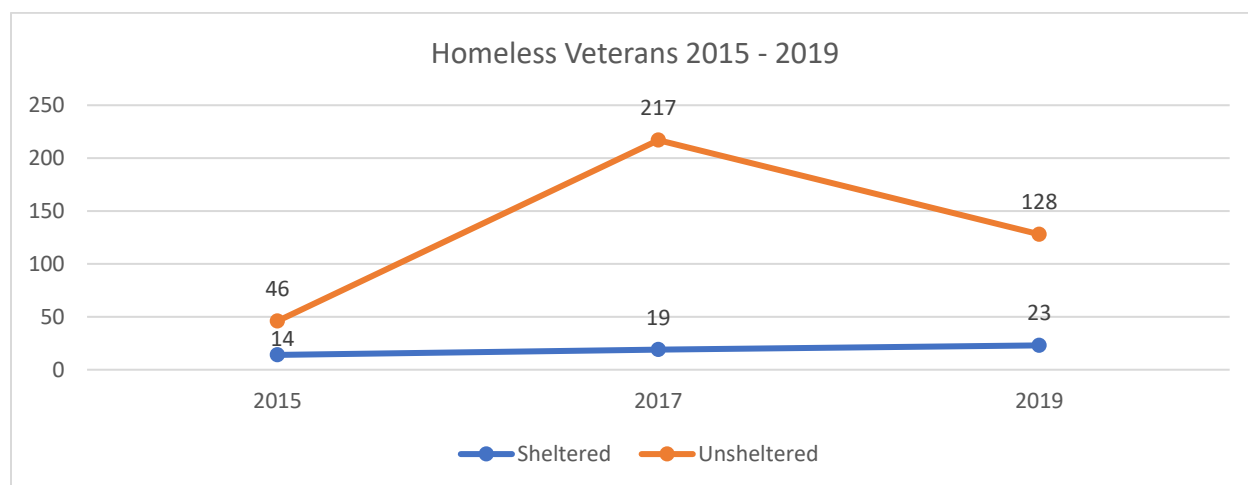
Also consistent with stakeholder reports of unusually high rates of youth experiencing homelessness in Santa Cruz County, the PIT count shows that the rate of youth experiencing unsheltered homelessness in Santa Cruz County increased 117% from 2015 to 2019. Since 2013, the community has conducted a separate, supplemental count of youth experiencing homelessness, using a separate methodology that takes into consideration the unique characteristics and trends of youth homelessness. The youth-specific methodology has been refined slightly each year to improve accuracy of the count.

According to PIT results, both TAY (ages 18 to 24) and unaccompanied minors accounted for around 29.8% of the total homeless population in 2019 and 26.4% of the population in 2017. The County's rates of homelessness amongst youth is higher than most neighboring high-cost, low-vacancy communities, including San Francisco where 18.8% of the population counted in 2018 was unaccompanied youth (both youth under 18 and TAY ages 18 to 24) and Alameda County were 17% of the population was youth. In San Diego County, which bears similarities to Santa Cruz with its high-cost housing market and beach culture, youth represented only 10.2% of the population. However, Santa Clara County, Santa Cruz County's most easterly neighbor, saw significantly higher rates of youth homelessness last year at around 34.6%.

As shown in the graph below, sheltered youth experiencing homelessness decreased slightly over the four years but the number of unsheltered youth has grown rapidly. From 2015 to 2019, the number of unsheltered youth experiencing homeless increased 145%. Meanwhile, community attention on and conversation around the issue of youth homelessness has increased. Santa Cruz County was one of the few communities nationally to be awarded the federal Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) grant, a new funding stream from HUD for communities to develop and implement strategies to prevent and end youth homelessness.

Homeless Youth (18-24) 2015 - 2019
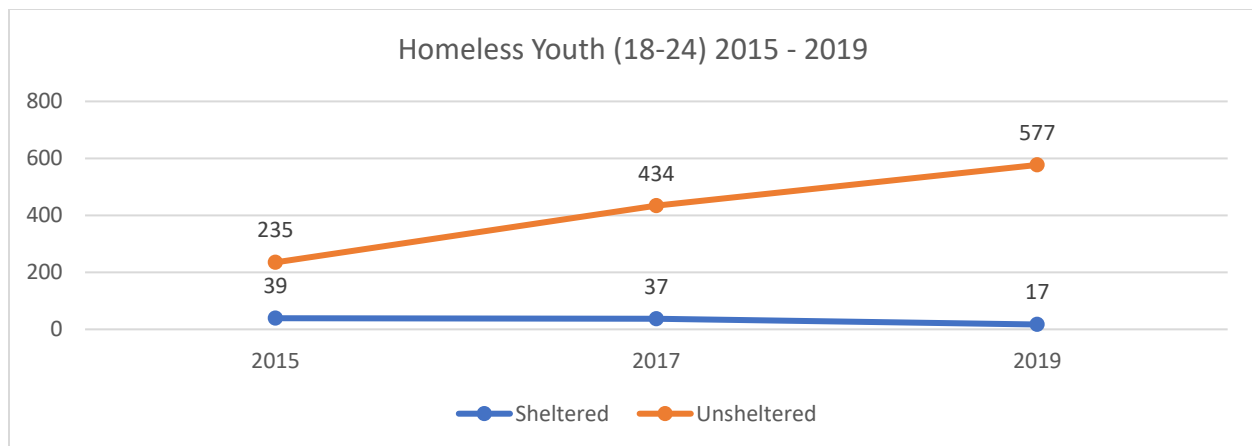
Based on the PIT data, the findings from the quantitative portion of the baseline assessment indicate rates of homelessness similar to large California communities, including San Francisco, Santa Clara, and Alameda Counties. The community has also seen some growth in homelessness (both overall and unsheltered) in recent years, though these increases are lower than that of other California communities, especially in the Bay Area region. As a community, Santa Cruz County has made significant progress on reducing chronic homelessness, despite youth homelessness appears to be on the rise (though this may be partly attributable to changes in counting methodology for the supplemental youth count).

Note, the information presented in this section is all based on Point In Time Counts (PIT) conducted by the HAP as part of their responsibilities as the CoC Board. PIT counts only provide a snapshot of the population of people experiencing homelessness. As people flow into and out of homelessness over time, more people experience homelessness over the course of a year than are counted on a single day. Many communities use their PIT data, along with information gathered from HMIS, to develop an annual estimate of the numbers of people experiencing homelessness. There is no annualized estimate currently available for Santa Cruz County, however, Focus Strategies plans to produce one as part of the SWAP work that will occur in the second half of 2019.

IV. Framework for Assessment: A Homeless Crisis Response System

A key purpose of this assessment is to determine how the community of Santa Cruz county (including the cities, the County, HAP, providers, funders and other stakeholders) is responding to the problem of homelessness. The guiding framework for this assessment is the concept of a *homeless crisis response system*. Experience from jurisdictions around the country, federal policy direction, and research all point to the need for communities to create a <u>system</u> to effectively end homelessness. While individual programs and initiatives may yield results with a subpopulation or group, making progress on the overall size of the homeless population requires a systematic approach.

A homeless crisis response system treats a loss of housing as an emergency that must be responded to quickly and effectively with a <u>housing</u> solution, targeting resources to this end. To achieve this system approach, all resources and programs are aligned around a consistent set of strategies and work toward shared, measurable objectives. The system's work is shaped by data – continuous analysis shows what is

working and where improvement is needed. The leaders and funders – both public and philanthropic – of the system hold all stakeholders accountable for results.

A homeless crisis response system is composed of three main programmatic components:

1. *Strategies to Reduce System Inflow*: System "inflow" refers to the phenomenon of people becoming homeless (i.e. moving from a housed situation into a literally homeless situation such as living outside or in an emergency shelter). Effective homeless response systems employ a variety of strategies to prevent homelessness and help people avoid entry into homeless programs by identifying alternative housing solutions. Examples of strategies to slow system inflow include:

   - *Targeted prevention*, which targets financial, legal, and other supports to preserve the existing housing situations of people who are at the highest risk of housing loss. Prevention traditionally provides assistance to households that self-identify as at-risk of homelessness and typically have a source of income or minimal barriers to housing stability. Research shows that most traditional prevention programs do not target households at high risk of homelessness, however, *targeted* prevention programs employ a set of criteria to identify households who are most likely to become homeless, which can be developed using local data;

   - *Diversion or housing problem-solving*, which helps people who are seeking shelter or other homeless services to remain housed or identify an alternative housing solution outside of the homeless response system. Generally, diversion specialists assist households that have already lost their housing or living in an informal shared housing situation (doubled up) to move directly to alternative housing, often with family or friends, avoiding a shelter stay or other homeless system response. Ideally, housing problem-solving should be attempted with each household seeking assistance from the homeless system and can be built in as a function of coordinated entry prior to assessment. Diversion should be strengths-based in its approach to help households brainstorm and identify next-step solutions to their housing crisis;

   - *Cross-system efforts* to reduce rates at which people are discharged from institutions such as hospitals, jails, and foster care without an identified place to live or stay. Communities are encouraged to examine and refine discharge practices within other systems of care to prevent people exiting other institutions into homelessness.

2. *High Performing Homeless System Interventions* – Every homeless crisis response system has an array of programs and interventions designed to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness – including mobile outreach, drop in services, emergency shelter, transitional housing, rapid rehousing, and permanent supportive housing. The effectiveness of these interventions is measured by how quickly they help people who are experiencing homelessness to secure housing and not return to homelessness. To achieve strong results, homeless system interventions should be aligned with evidence-based practices and have no or low entry barriers, provide services that concretely support people to develop and implement a housing plan, not require service participation as a condition of helping people secure housing, and operate using

client-centered and trauma informed principles. The community's CES should also play a key role in facilitating the seamless movement of people from homelessness to housing by moving people quickly to the available resources intended to end their homelessness.

3. *Housing Exits*: Successfully reducing homelessness requires that a community have an adequate supply of appropriate, affordable housing for people to exit from homelessness. This includes efforts to expand the supply of rental housing that is affordable to people at the lowest income levels through construction of new rental units as well as acquisition and rehabilitation of existing housing. Expanding the availability of housing exits also includes strategies to assist people to access housing that already exists in the housing market, such as providing either short- or long-term rent subsidies, recruiting landlords to accept subsidies, or providing housing search and navigation services to help people locate and secure housing.

In addition to these client-focused approaches, the homeless crisis response system requires three key structural elements that support its effectiveness, including:

1. **Leadership and Governance**: The most crucial element of a homeless crisis response system is a unified governance structure that brings together the community leadership and key system funders – both public and private – within a single entity or coordinated set of entities. This structure must do more than just support collaboration across the different parts of the system. To be effective, the system governance must be empowered to guide system-level planning and decision-making – bringing decision-makers together to develop, adopt, implement and evaluate a single shared set of strategies and policies, including policies governing how funds are invested.

2. **Planning, Policy Development, Data and Evaluation Capacity**. A homeless crisis response system must have the infrastructure and staffing to support ongoing assessment of performance at both the project and overall system levels. This includes having a robust Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data system that achieves high participation rates and data quality. Expertise and strong data analysis capacity are also needed so that leadership and key stakeholders can use the data regularly and (as much as possible) in real time to understand system inflow and program and system level performance and use this information to shape strategies that will lead to reductions in homelessness.

3. **Staffing Capacity.** As noted above, developing and implementing a homeless crisis response system requires that there be not only strong leadership but an implementation and administrative structure to support implementation. This means that the functions of system planning, policy development, data analysis and evaluation all must be included as responsibilities of the system's administrative structure and have dedicated staffing assigned to them.

Appendix E provides additional information on homeless crisis response systems, including a system diagram.

V. Assessment of Community Response to Homelessness: Current Efforts, Strengths, Challenges

This section describes how the Santa Cruz community is currently responding to homelessness and presents Focus Strategies' preliminary assessment of the strengths and challenges of the current approach, which is guided by the framework described above. As noted previously, this initial assessment is largely based on qualitative information, stakeholder input, and readily available data from the Point in Time count and other sources. Deeper targeted data-gathering and analysis will take place in the next phase of this technical assistance engagement, which will allow Focus Strategies to more fully understand some of the issues raised in this initial assessment. This deep-dive analysis will also enable stakeholders to work with the data to create more specific approaches and models for change.

This section presents the different elements of the homeless response in Santa Cruz County. In each section, we briefly describe the current conditions "on the ground," based on available information, as well as our initial assessment of strengths and challenges. In many areas, we do not yet have enough information to make a thorough assessment. As we shift to the quantitative analysis in the next phase of this work, more in-depth assessment will be possible.

The assessment findings are organized as follows:

A. Leadership and Governance
B. Strategies to Reduce Inflow
C. Homeless System Interventions
     1. Emergency Responses: Outreach, Shelter, Encampment Response
     2. Homeless-Targeted Housing
     3. Coordinated Entry
D. Housing Exits
E. Data and Evaluation Capacity
F. Other System Components and Topics

A. Leadership and Governance

As described above, a key element of any crisis response system is a system governance and oversight structure that holds the authority to make plans and investment decisions, as well as to evaluate progress against goals that the community has set. Governance and oversight of the community's response to homelessness has been a significant topic of conversation in Santa Cruz County over the past several years. As new State funding sources, such as HEAP and CESH, have flowed into the community in 2018 and 2019, the issue has gained even greater urgency. This section briefly describes the existing governance structure(s), recent efforts to redesign the structure through a Governance Study Committee and identified strengths and challenges of the current and proposed structure. Focus Strategies' recommendations relating to governance, as well as other short-term recommendations are presented in Section VI.

i. Historical Background and Description of Homeless System Governance and Structure

The Homeless Action Partnership (HAP) is the Continuum of Care (CoC) lead for Santa Cruz County. HUD defines the CoC as the primary structure for system planning, funding alignment, and implementation of a coordinated community-wide response to homelessness. Specific responsibilities include coordinating the annual CoC funding application, implementing the community's HMIS system, complying with HUD's data collection and reporting requirements (PIT count, Housing Inventory, system performance, etc.), and strategic planning and homeless system development. The HAP has been meeting regularly since 1996. The current HAP structure consists of:

- A general membership (the HAP), which meets six times per year. Its broad membership includes County and city staff, non-profit housing and service providers, victim service providers, faith-based organizations, advocates, school districts, social service providers, mental health agencies, research organization, affordable housing developers, and Veteran-serving agencies. The HAP has a wide range of responsibilities including appointing the Collaborative Applicant for CoC funds, appointing working committees, developing CoC policies and procedures, implementing coordinated entry, overseeing HMIS, conducting the PIT, and overseeing the CoC application to HUD.

- The HAP Governance Board, which meets at least two times per year and is made up of selected/seated membership that includes city representatives, the County's Homeless Services Coordinator, selected funders and service providers, and a person with lived experience of homelessness. The Governance Board is primarily responsible for reviewing and ranking CoC funding applications, developing any changes to the CoC Charter, and acting as the primary policy decision-maker for the HAP.

- A Jurisdictional Executive Committee, which by charter meets two times a year in spring and fall but has met more frequently in recent years. Membership includes city representatives and County department representatives. Its role is to coordinate inter-jurisdictional activity on homelessness, as well as to review and approve jurisdictional cost sharing for homelessness activities (HAP staffing, PIT, winter shelter, etc.).

The HAP is a collaborative planning body that does not hold legal status as an entity (i.e. it is not a non-profit organization or formally seated governmental Board). Since 2008, it has been staffed by the Santa Cruz County Planning Department, which also serves as the Collaborative Applicant for CoC funding. A CoC consultant provides technical and strategic support to the HAP and the Planning Department. As of July 1, 2019, the CoC Collaborative Applicant and system planning role is shifting to the Homeless Services Coordinator within the County Administrative Office (CAO), with continued support from a CoC consultant.

Other entities in the community have also played a role in homelessness system planning and development. These include:

- Smart Solutions, which was formed in 2011 to develop a collaborative, community-wide discussion on homelessness involving the broader community. This group held a Homelessness

Summit in 2012 and in 2014-2015 partnered with the County, HAP and United Way to develop the *All In Strategic Plan* to address homelessness.

- <u>South County Homeless Steering Committee</u>, which has been meeting regularly to coordinate and plan the response to homelessness in Watsonville and South County area to implement strategies in the *All In* Plan.

- <u>County Homeless Coordinating Committee</u>, which was convened by the County of Santa Cruz as an internal group of departmental County representatives tasked to work on developing a more coordinated response to homelessness among County departments (CAO, Human Services, Health, Behavioral Health, etc.).

- <u>City Coordinating Council</u>, which include individual sets of strategies developed by the four cities in the community (Santa Cruz, Watsonville, Capitola, Scotts Valley). The City of Santa Cruz has developed a 20-point homeless plan and has recently launched plans to convene a Homeless Advisory Committee.

In 2017-2018, the County convened a Homeless Governance Study Committee to analyze existing coordinating structures and make recommendations for possible restructuring or creation of a new governing entity. Identified problems the Committee set out to address, as reflected in materials developed by the Committee, were:

- Lack of a regional decision-making body and structure with sufficiently broad representation from all necessary stakeholders and responsibility and authority to establish shared priorities, plan, and make decisions on a broad range of issues facing the region: no central authority or decision-maker to set regional priorities, HAP scope too narrowly focused on CoC funding, and HUD-mandated planning requirements

- Lack of overall coordination. There are multiple competing initiatives launched by different entities and stakeholders, lack of clear and sufficient communication and information sharing.

- Insufficient capacity and resources, insufficient staffing for homeless system planning and implementation (including system assessment, performance measurement, data analysis, developing strategic priorities), insufficient local funding, and lack of capacity to compete for funding.

After meeting over the course of about 18 months and considering options ranging from creation of a new formal entity, such as a JPA, to maintaining the current structure, the Committee put forth a set of recommendations for restructuring the existing HAP. The main elements of this proposed restructure were to retain the basic structure of the HAP and incorporate the following changes:

- Restructure the existing HAP Board into an Interagency Policy Council (IPC) tasked with being the primary decision-maker for the homeless system and not limited to HUD activities. Responsibilities would include setting policy, allocating funding, and setting performance targets.

The IPC would serve as the central coordinating body for the full range of homelessness programs, services, and initiatives. The existing Board would be expanded, and the IPC would consist largely of high-level community leadership and funders.

- Retain the Jurisdictional Executive Committee but rename it to "the Jurisdictional Coordinating Committee" and continuing to coordinate interjurisdictional budgeting and cost sharing for homeless activities, such as winter shelter.

- Retain the existing HAP but rename it as the General Membership/Operations group.

While the recommendations were generally welcomed by most stakeholders, the work of the Committee was paused in 2018 before the recommendations could be finalized and adopted. As new funding streams were rolling out into the community from the State, there were some questions about appropriate membership for the IPC as envisioned, and whether this was the right approach for allocating these or other new resources. Some members of the HAP raised a question as to whether the proposed structure would need refining to ensure compliance with HUD CoC Governance requirements. People involved in the process also became very busy with preparing for the new resources, and lack of adequate staffing capacity made it impossible to proceed on both action areas at the same time.

ii. Assessment: Strengths and Challenges in System Planning, Governance and Structure

Strengths: The existing "CoC-centric" governance structure of the HAP is a common way in which California communities have organized their response to homelessness – a volunteer board with a governmental lead agency, primarily focused on managing the federal CoC funding stream. In this regard, the HAP appears to be very high functioning. They are ensuring HUD's planning and data collection requirements are met and expanding federal resources for homelessness, such as through the Youth Homeless Demonstration Program (YHDP) grant. Stakeholders we spoke to largely hold positive views of the HAP, pointing to the benefit of having a forum in which all the homeless-dedicated entities in the community come together to share information, coordinate their work, and stay abreast of changes in the field.

The *All In Plan*, developed jointly by Smart Solutions, HAP, County and the United Way, reflects this collaborative spirit and identifies a set of strategies that are well-aligned with federal policy priorities and the latest thinking in the field. The *All In Plan* sets goals to transform the crisis response system by implementing coordinated entry, increasing prevention and diversion, increasing access to affordable housing, ensuring people maintain housing after exiting homelessness, and integrating the homeless system with mainstream benefits, among other goals. The plan sets the goal to end chronic homelessness and other adult homelessness as well as family homelessness by 2020. It also articulates a priority of addressing the needs of South County, initiating a response to youth homelessness and ending veteran homelessness.

The work of the Homeless Governance Study Committee is another strength, reflecting a recognition among stakeholders of the need to further develop the homeless system governance structure to be less narrowly focused on CoC funds. Instead, they recognize the need to be more broadly responsible for devising a system and strategy to address homelessness throughout the community and aligning funding

to achieve shared objectives, including the many non-CoC funding streams. As the State begins to release more funds that must be allocated using a local structure and process, revisiting of this structure is even more crucial. The County of Santa Cruz creation of a dedicated position for a Homeless Services Coordinator within the CAO and shifting the CoC functions to that office is an important step towards creating a dedicated countywide planning and coordination function.

Challenges: In our assessment, while the governance redesign efforts are on the right track and should continue, the work needs to focus in particular on joint decision making about investments and oversight. Specifically, the next phase of governance work should flesh out in greater detail how the new governance structure will ensure there is a strong and well-understood set of roles and processes for setting funding priorities and ensuring coordination and alignment of funding, particularly given the expectation that new State funding sources are likely to continue flowing into the community.

The proposed new structure sets up some proposed roles for the new IPC and the Jurisdictional Executive Committee in setting priorities and making funding decisions. However, it remains to address the importance and complexities of who will make key funding decisions and how they will ensure that these decisions are transparent, fair, and inclusive while also strategic and focused on maximizing impact. Due to the idiosyncrasies of the CoC funding stream in which funds flow directly from HUD to providers, the HAP has historically avoided getting directly involved in making awards and managing funding. However, now, as new funds like HEAP and CESH are flowing from the state to the CoC, tensions have arisen. The HAP, which is tasked with making HEAP and CESH funding decisions, is comprised of agencies that are also recipients of funding – raising concerns that their involvement in funding decisions creates conflicts of interest. Additionally, since the HAP is not able to accept funds or enter into contracts, the County is playing the role of funding administrator (issuing the RFP, managing the application and contracting process), but is not the decision-maker. This had led to a perception of confusion around roles and concerns about fairness and transparency.

The community's community-wide plan *All In* sets some key strategic goals and a direction for the homeless system, however, a clear set of overarching funding priorities are lacking and compound the problems identified above. In the absence of a clearly articulated strategy, the funding priorities that the HAP and County developed for HEAP and CESH were very broad, and the award process ended up spreading funds thinly to *many* providers and projects, rather than investing significantly in specific, prioritized strategies and gaps to make the greatest measurable impact. Focus Strategies heard concerns from stakeholders who were disappointed in the process, and this was not limited to those who might have been disappointed by their own results. Several stakeholders reported spending significant time reviewing and rating applications but, in the end, felt it was not clear why certain projects were funded and not others. Funders interviewed (private and public) expressed a desire to see a more coherent and comprehensive community strategy to guide their investments. They recognize a need for strategic thinking and leadership to tell them where funds can be best spent to have the biggest impact.

In general, our information gathering revealed concerns among stakeholders about a perceived lack of transparency in decision-making relating to homelessness. In our view, the problem is not primarily a lack of transparency per se on the part of decision-makers, but rather that there are many fragmented and uncoordinated planning and decision-making processes in Santa Cruz county. The absence of a well-

understood and clear decision-making process generates a sense among some stakeholders that the process is mysterious or intentionally obscured.

Although the current HAP structure includes an interjurisdictional coordination committee, the County and the four cities tend to operate independently and make many decisions on their own, though some of these decisions are based on city-specific context or issues. Jurisdictions have worked together through the HAP to jointly fund winter shelter, but the day-to day response to homelessness within their jurisdictions, as well as planning for any other local investment and evaluation of investment impact do not seem to be taking place within the existing HAP structure and therefore lacks shared objectives and coordination. For example, some cities view their role primarily as responding to the immediate problem of people living outside by deploying a law enforcement and public works response, while looking to the County to address the housing and service needs of people experiencing homelessness. However, this view hasn't translated into agreements about explicit roles or how to handle mutual problems, allowing for a certain amount of finger-pointing. This is not unusual in California where counties are the nexus for most service needs and cities are the holders of law enforcement, public space, and development decisions in incorporated areas.

Some stakeholders are concerned that people with lived experience are not well-represented in planning arenas and this aligns with what Focus Strategies has observed. The community culture does not seem to strongly involve people with lived experience in planning or feedback. To illustrate this point, Focus Strategies struggled to even convene focus groups with people experiencing homelessness, as there are fairly few existing groups consisting of people with lived experience that meet regularly. Nevertheless, we observed strong participation from youth with lived experience of homelessness on the Youth Advisory Board (YAB). The YAB serves as a model for inclusivity and meaningful participation in system planning by people who are currently or formerly experiencing homelessness.

B.   Strategies to Reduce Inflow

Strategies to reduce the rate at which people enter homelessness is a critical element of a community's efforts to reduce homelessness. Our assessment found that in Santa Cruz County these types of efforts are relatively under-developed.

- *Diversion*: Diversion (sometimes also known as problem-solving) is a practice designed to "catch" people at the point at which they have just entered homelessness or right before (such as when they are seeking a shelter bed) and engage them in a strengths-based conversation to identify a no-cost or low-cost housing solution if at all possible (such as living with a friend, securing a shared housing situation, or returning to family members). It is a highly effective practice that can reduce the growth of the homeless population and particularly for people who have recently become homeless. In Santa Cruz County, diversion is not a fully built-out component of the system, though there are plans to incorporate diversion activities into the CES system. Stakeholders we interviewed noted that some providers try to divert people who approach their programs, but this activity tends to be inconsistent. Some system providers offer light-touch services and/or financial assistance to households to facilitate a quick connection to permanent housing. In addition, the Homeward Bound program, which is funded by the City of Santa Cruz, provides bus passes for people who have identified alternative housing opportunities outside of

the City/County. More expansive, flexible diversion assistance – such as flexible financial assistance to help people maintain their own unit or remain living with friends or family; mediation with landlords, roommates, or family members; and staffing to engage in housing problem-solving conversations – are limited.

- *Targeted Prevention*: Targeted prevention programs attempt to identify people who are still housed but who are either facing eviction or otherwise will lose their housing. To be maximally effective at reducing homelessness, these types of programs must use very strong targeting criteria to identify those households most at risk of becoming homeless after eviction. Evidence shows that many households that suffer a loss of housing do not become homeless but rather use their family and social networks to identify alternative housing. Traditional prevention programs which do not target in this way typically assess whether the household seeking assistance can independently sustain their rent and other expenses after the assistance period ends as a basic eligibility criterion. As a result, these prevention programs typically serve households that have a source of stable income and minimal barriers to housing stability. Targeted prevention programs, on the other hand, utilize a set of screening criteria to identify households facing a housing crisis who are most at risk of becoming homeless. For example, qualifying households may have previously been homeless, have no income, experience a disabling condition, and/or be a young parent, all factors that have been shown to be more highly correlated with homelessness. Targeting criteria for effective prevention should be specific to the community and can be developed using local HMIS data or can draw from existing community data related to which households are most likely to become homeless. Currently in Santa Cruz County, there are a number of eviction prevention and rental assistance programs, but our assessment has not explored how well targeted these programs are. We did not hear that these were specifically aligned with the goals of the homeless system.

- *Coordinated Entry System (CES)*: Santa Cruz has recently launched and is currently expanding the reach of a coordinated entry system for homelessness. While some inflow reduction practices relate closely to CES, the primary purpose of coordinated entry is to connect people to housing programs; we have addressed CES in the next section.

- *Institutional Discharge:* Typically, a portion of the homeless population enter or re-enter homelessness from institutional settings such as hospitals and jails. In Santa Cruz County, some initiatives and pilot programs to reduce discharge from institutions into homelessness are in early development to identify and address the needs of people who are homeless who cycle in and out of institutions. These include the re-entry program currently operated by the Sherriff's Department, the HUGS frequent user initiative, and some preliminary work being done on cross-system data matching which could identify people who are found in multiples systems of care including the homeless system. But as of yet there is no overarching County strategy to reduce inflow from mainstream systems of care into homelessness.

C.   Homeless System Interventions

This section describes the community's primary homeless system interventions. In each area, we have assessed the extent to which these interventions appear to be high performing and aligned with known

evidence-based practices. Our primary metric for assessing these interventions is how well they appear to be creating solutions that help people transition from homelessness to housing.

1. Emergency Response: Mobile Outreach, Drop-In Services, Emergency Shelter, and Encampment Response

All communities, particularly those in which there is significant unsheltered homelessness, have a range of emergency or crisis response interventions that make up the "front end" of the homeless system. These interventions typically include street-based contacts and services to those living outside, such as outreach and engagement, as well as temporary places for people to stay during the day (drop-in and day centers) and at-night (shelter.) Given that unsheltered homelessness creates a range of community health and safety issues, it is important that the crisis response focus on addressing the immediate health and safety needs of people experiencing homelessness and the community in which they are living. However, in a highly functioning homeless crisis response system, the emergency response should not only address these immediate concerns – it should be part of an overall strategy to reduce homelessness by offering temporary places for people to stay safely without excluding those who need them and effective interventions that provide a pathway to housing. Our assessment of the emergency response to homelessness in Santa Cruz County considers current efforts through this lens. Currently, Santa Cruz County has a promising opportunity to move towards a systemwide emergency response approach that is grounded in these principles (i.e. a focus on housing, and use of low-barrier, evidence-based practices) through the addition of new State dollars.

i.   *Description of Current Emergency Response*

Santa Cruz county has several emergency response programs intended to address or at least ameliorate the immediate crisis of homelessness for those living outside. These program types include outreach, day services, shelter, safe parking, and encampment response. The following section provides an overview of the community's existing emergency response components of the homeless system.

- *Outreach:* There are five CoC-funded and a few other non-CoC funded mobile outreach programs operating in Santa Cruz County. Some of the community's outreach workers are deputized to conduct immediate, in-person assessments to connect individuals to Smart Path, the community's CES, which provides a front door to homeless system resources (see more in section below entitled "Coordinated Entry System"). Throughout the CES process, outreach workers attempt to remain engaged with clients to provide communication and assistance, and, when possible, facilitate successful housing referral and placement through Smart Path.

  The community's other outreach services are mostly focused on helping individuals meet basic and health needs (both mental and physical and include both Continuum of Care (CoC) and non-CoC funded programs such as Homeless Persons' Health Project (HPHP), Encompass Downtown Outreach Worker Team, Homeless Outreach Proactive Engagement & Services (HOPES), Maintaining Ongoing Stability through Treatment (MOST), Youth and Veterans Outreach, and the Downtown Streets Team. The County of Santa Cruz, City of Santa Cruz, and the City of Watsonville fund mental health workers, through the Mental Health Liaison Program, who accompany police officers and provide engagement and support to people who are unsheltered. Services under this program are offered countywide as

part of outreach. Outreach programs provide valuable resources and connections for people experiencing homelessness, but these programs operate outside of an overall systematic approach and therefore are not designed to connect people to other parts of the system or to the resources needed to access permanent housing as a primary objective.

- *Drop-In and Day Services*: Drop-in centers typically are places where people who are unsheltered can receive some essential services (e.g. showers, laundry, mail) and access social services on a drop-in basis. Offering drop-in centers <u>can</u> be an effective strategy for engaging with people who are living outside and who need a significant period of engagement before they will access social services or housing. Effective drop-in programs have staff who are adept at engagement and services available to support people to transition to housing. Currently, there appear to be a limited number of homeless-specific drop-in programs in Santa Cruz County. The Homeless Service Center (HSC) offers some basic hygiene services, but they are primarily a provider of shelter, housing, and case management. The Salvation Army in Watsonville provides a variety of drop in services such as showers and meals. Our initial assessment did not explore the depth or quality of engagement taking place at these drop-in centers or whether clients accessing drop-in services are being connected to shelter and housing.

- *Emergency Shelter*: As previously mentioned, slightly less than one-quarter of people experiencing homelessness were staying in emergency shelter on the night of the 2019 PIT. As shown in the following data derived from annual Housing Inventory Count (HIC) provided to HUD, the community's shelter inventory has declined slightly over the past five years, with current capacity at 439 beds. Appendix F provides a list of the shelters that make up these 439 beds.

	Total Capacity 2019 HIC (Beds)	Total Capacity 2018 HIC (Beds)	Total Capacity 2017 HIC (Beds)	Total Capacity 2016 HIC (Beds)	Total Capacity 2015 HIC (Beds)
Emergency Shelter	439	435	387	475	481

The majority of the community's shelter inventory is in the northern region of the County, mostly in and near the City of Santa Cruz. There are far fewer shelter services in the southern part of the County, though the relative need is also smaller. Many South County shelter beds were seasonal until very recently when some year-round shelter beds came online. Leveraging new State dollars (HEAP and CESH), the community is currently working on creating two new sites that will act as navigation centers in both the North and South County; both of which would provide year-round low-barrier emergency shelter and access to housing-focused services. At this point, a working site has been identified in South County but not in North County. In the interim, due to a lack of immediately available sites for new navigation centers, key features of the navigation center model are being introduced into existing shelters so that they may begin to fill the role of navigation centers.

Most of the community's shelter beds operate on a year-round basis (64%) though greater than one-third of the beds operate seasonally – typically during the winter months only. However, the community's seasonal beds will expand to being year-round soon. The following table shows the total number of year-round and seasonal beds in the community this year.

	Year-Round Capacity 2019 (Beds)	Seasonal Capacity 2019 (Beds)
Emergency Shelter	279	160

- *Safe Parking*: Safe Parking is relatively new component of the emergency response system, offering a network of church parking lots and public facilities to provide spaces for specific people experiencing homelessness to park their vehicles and access hygiene services. Currently, there are seven locations and 33 participants in the program, which has a dedicated coordinator that seeks to match people to an accessible, appropriate church parking lot as an alternative to street parking, with more capacity to come online in the near term. This program is still new and will be further explored in the next phase of this TA project.

- *Encampment Response:* While not a formally named or intentionally designed system element, responding to encampments of tents and temporary structures has been a current focus in Santa Cruz County, particularly at the city level. Thus, we have included our assessment and understanding of these practices in this baseline report. As previously mentioned, a majority of Santa Cruz County's homeless population (around 78%) are living in unsheltered locations. This includes both sanctioned and unsanctioned encampments. Historically, the largest encampments have emerged along Highway 1, as well as River Street and Downtown Santa Cruz, however, smaller ones have appeared in locations throughout the county. Public entities throughout the county have generally responded by asking encampment participants to disburse and cleaning up large unsanctioned encampments perceived to pose safety, health, or environmental threats to the community. The primary response is to offer encampment residents a referral to emergency shelter (though openings are limited), other emergency services and/or, in some cases, an option to move to a sanctioned encampment. There have been a limited number of sanctioned encampments, including the current 1220 River Street site. The River Street site is a tent-based shelter. 1220 River Street is fully-staffed and the services follow a short-term shelter model. However, the practice of permitting sanctioned encampments has been variably implemented; resulting in the opening and closing of encampments due to a lack of ability to sustain them. River Street, for example, is only currently planned to remain open until spring 2020 and plans for what will happen next are unresolved.

ii. *Assessment: Strengths and Challenges of the Emergency Response*

Strengths: The community's existing emergency response employs a wide range of strategies to assist people to meet their basic, health, and mental health needs. Diverse and wide-reaching outreach programs exist to engage people experiencing homelessness in homeless system and mainstream resources, while a variety of shelter programs are offered to those in both the northern and southern area of the County. In general, stakeholders who were engaged reported that emergency shelter and service providers are skillful and committed to assisting those experiencing homelessness. Shelter providers we interviewed appeared to be doing good work to support residents to secure housing solutions, within the constraints of available resources. Further, with the roll-out of new State Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) program, the community has a significant opportunity to leverage these dollars towards low-barrier, evidence-based emergency response strategies. Strategic use of HEAP funds

also provides an opportunity for the County to fill gaps in both geographical and seasonal shelter availability.

Challenges: Based on our assessment of the local system and conversations with key stakeholders in Santa Cruz County, the community's emergency response strategies are small in scale for the size of the population and appear to lack sufficient connection to strategies that help people secure housing. While some shelters have services in place to support clients to develop housing plans or provide case management, these types of interventions are not available systematically at all shelters. Mobile outreach teams largely are focused on meeting immediate health and safety needs and have not been equipped with training or information on how to engage clients in a "housing problem-solving" or "diversion" conversation to discuss possible housing solutions that may be available within someone's natural pool of resources or how to connect them to another potential housing pathway. There is also a lack of sufficient locations in the community where people who are unsheltered can access housing-specific services, such as housing resources/information, diversion, or housing-focused case management, on a drop-in basis. Many stakeholders are focused on a perceived need to increase emergency shelter inventory. Given the high rate of unsheltered homelessness and the fact that over one-third of shelter beds only operate seasonally, additional shelter capacity could be useful, however, we believe that a more strategic and immediate use of system efforts would be focusing on ensuring *existing* shelter options are more housing-focused and accomplish the goal of assisting those with the highest needs exit homelessness to safe, stable housing.

The navigation centers in South County and addition of North County Navigation Center include both emergency shelter and day services, has drawn a great deal of attention and been met with mixed opinions. Navigation centers are a new intervention type and additional work in the field to define what makes this model distinct is needed. However, typically, the centers are extremely low barrier shelters that allow people to enter with pets, partners, and/or significant personal belongings, which often are not permitted in traditional shelters. They are also typically highly staffed and open 24/7 with residents being permitted to come and go, and they are often intended to be used for very high need/high priority persons who are expected to be "navigated" to a housing solution. While many stakeholders believe the navigation centers would provide a crucial opportunity to increase shelter inventory and engage a greater number of people, others expressed skepticism about the effectiveness of the proposed programs. In our assessment, the community seems to lack a solid, shared understanding of what the purpose, goals, and functions of these navigation centers will be. Additionally, much of the conversation has been centered around identifying a physical location and siting of the centers and lack focus or clarity on the proposed service model. To be effective, navigation centers should provide low-barrier shelter with strong connections to permanent housing to serve those with the highest needs and barriers to housing. Community conversation should also shift towards ensuring *all* shelter in the community is low barrier, while employing a housing first approach and other best practices.

Focus Strategies does not yet have the information needed to assess whether additional shelter capacity is needed. Data to help us answer this question will be gathered in the next phase of work. Once we have completed the initial round of system and project performance assessment, we will be in a better position to advise on the potential need for and impact of additional shelter beds and housing specific services.

Our assessment found that efforts to address and resolve encampments to date appear largely aimed at moving people away from existing sites due to legitimate health and safety concerns but without an articulated plan for where people will go, other than to a new encampment or possibly to shelter. To be effective, encampment resolution efforts must connect as many people as possible to a pathway out of homelessness – through diversion/problem-solving to find an immediate housing solution, placement into shelter or navigation center where they receive housing focused-case management, treatment beds for those who articulate a desire for treatment, direct placement into housing, and/or connection to mainstream services that can help support the acquisition of income. Absent a housing strategy, people who are unsheltered will likely simply move from one encampment to another or disperse onto streets and other locations not meant for people to live.

Some stakeholders we interviewed noted that in recent years the unsheltered population seems to have become increasingly "aggressive" and many appear to suffer from mental health and substance use challenges. This has led to a focus by some on the need for treatment options as a primary solution to unsheltered people's homelessness. Some people experiencing homelessness who we spoke with also mentioned concerns about others on the streets, but few talked about seeking or needing treatment. All spoke primarily about their need for income opportunities and housing solutions. Evidence from the field suggests that treatment needs to be available quickly when people are ready to take it up but that for many people, their interest and success in treatment is greater once they have a stable, permanent place to live. Offering health and behavioral health care to people in encampments is not likely to yield strong results absent a housing strategy. As noted above, the community already has mobile outreach programs devoted to providing health and behavioral health services to people outside. Some stakeholders also noted that outreach workers that work with people in encampments need increase information and improved training, with a focus on trauma-informed care and connecting people to appropriate system resources.

2. Homeless Targeted Housing Interventions: Transitional Housing, Rapid Rehousing, and Permanent Supportive Housing

In a high functioning homeless crisis response system, housing interventions should be designed to help people move from literal homelessness to housing as rapidly as possible. Interventions should be allocated based on need, with the highest need individuals receiving permanent supportive housing. Our assessment considered the size of the inventory of these interventions, how they are targeted and how they are accessed by people experiencing homelessness, as well as the alignment of the program models with national best practices.

i. Descriptions of Existing Homeless Targeted Housing Interventions

Existing housing interventions in Santa Cruz County include transitional housing, rapid rehousing, and permanent supportive housing. The following table shows the inventory of available housing interventions. Appendix F provides a detailed list of the programs in each of these program types.

Program Type	Total Capacity 2019 HIC (Beds)	Total Capacity 2018 HIC (Beds)	Total Capacity 2017 HIC (Beds)	Total Capacity 2016 HIC (Beds)	Total Capacity 2015 HIC (Beds)
Transitional Housing	182	223	201	228	247
Rapid Rehousing	204	191	185	167	131
Permanent Supportive Housing	580	560	638	457	409

Transitional Housing: Transitional housing (TH) programs offer a temporary housing placement with on-site supportive services (usually in a group living environment) for up to two years with the goal of helping people obtain and maintain permanent housing upon exit. In recent years, a wealth of evidence from around the country has demonstrated that this program model tends to be very expensive and does not yield strong results – households tend to have long lengths of stay in programs (meaning continued homelessness during that time) and many do not secure housing upon exit. For this reason, HUD has encouraged communities to evaluate their transitional housing inventory and reduce investments in this approach if programs are underperforming. Santa Cruz County has followed this guidance, reducing the supply of TH from 247 beds in 2015 to only 182 in 2019, a 36% decrease. Since Transitional Housing does not provide a permanent housing solution, it should more appropriately be considered part of the community's emergency response. However, in Santa Cruz County, stakeholders tend to view TH as a housing intervention, thus, we have included it in this section.

Rapid Rehousing: Rapid rehousing (RRH) provides households with short-term rental subsidies and time-limited case management to help them secure a rental unit in the private housing market. At the end of the term of assistance, most households take overpaying 100% of the rent (unless another subsidy is secured). Evidence from around the nation shows that RRH is more cost effective and yields better results than transitional housing, consequently HUD has encouraged communities to expand this intervention. The *All In Plan* calls for an increase in RRH supply. As seen in the table above, largely as a result of HUD CoC grant dollars being reallocated away from transitional housing towards rapid rehousing programs, rapid rehousing beds have increased from 131 in 2015 to 204 beds in 2019, an overall increase of 73 beds (56% increase overall).

Permanent Supportive Housing: PSH provides long-term rental subsidies or permanently subsidized housing units coupled with intensive services for people who have the most intensive needs – generally those who are chronically homeless. As shown in the table above, the amount of permanent supportive housing in Santa Cruz County has grown steadily since 2015, with some fluctuations. Much of the PSH inventory is funded through CoC grants. There are also some highly successful and innovative non-CoC funded PSH efforts in place, including:

- *Disabled and Medically Vulnerable (DMC) Program*: The DMV program, operated by the Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz, sets aside 120 vouchers on a rolling basis for those experiencing homelessness. The program allows persons experiencing homelessness to bypass traditional Section 8 waiting lists and receive a voucher through a specific pipeline created to aid those experiencing homelessness and work to get those individuals into housing. As part of

helping clients maintain their housing, the program also requires these voucher holders have case management for at least one year through a provider of housing supportive services. The DMV program will automatically "graduate" voucher recipients that have been stably housed for two years into more traditional voucher when funding and resources allow, freeing up the vacated DMV vouchers for another person experiencing homelessness.

- *180/2020 Initiative*: Coordinated by the Homeless Services Center, the original 180/180 Initiative was a collaborative launched in 2012 that worked in conjunction with the National 100,000 Homes Campaign. By 2014, the 180/180 Initiative had exceeded its goal to house at least 180 of the community's most medically vulnerable and chronically homeless by placing 200 individuals into housing. To build upon this success and momentum, Santa Cruz County renamed the 180/180 to be the 180/2020 Initiative with the goal of housing more of the same, highly vulnerable population. In doing the work, the collaborative expanded the scope of work to include the DMV program mentioned above, housing workshops aimed at assisting those experiencing homelessness, a multi-agency Housing Work Group to collaborate on housing for the vulnerable, and the addition of three permanent supportive housing case managers. The 180/2020 Initiative has continued to house individuals and as of September 2017, 750 people have been housed.

ii. *Assessment: Strengths and Challenges of Homeless-Targeted Housing Interventions*

Strengths: This area appears to be a community strength, considering that the community has been slowly shifting its inventory of interventions in the right direction – decreasing transitional housing and increasing rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing. The assessment process did not encompass looking at specific program policies and procedures, so we were not able to assess the degree to which these programs are aligned to best practices. In general, providers seemed well-versed in housing first concepts such as low barriers to program entry, strengths-based and voluntary services, and client choice. For example, the Disabled and Medically Vulnerable (DMV) program administered by the Santa Cruz Housing Authority works very flexibly with households to help them secure and maintain housing and graduates clients to a regular Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) subsidy without having to change units. Stakeholders also reported that the 180/2020 initiative has helped the system embrace housing first approaches and bridge the gap for housing between landlords and tenants through relationship building and housing navigation.

As part of Focus Strategies' continued work in the community, we will assess the performance of the communities homeless-targeted housing programs using the System-wide Analytics and Projection (SWAP) suite of tools, which will enable us to better understand how they are contributing to the overall goal of reducing homelessness.

Challenges: While some programs are well-versed in best practices, one challenge we observed is that other providers, as well as many in the broader community of stakeholders, do not seem very familiar with these program models. Additionally, many do not seem to connect the problem of unsheltered homelessness to the need for more targeted and specialized housing interventions. For example, some providers expressed concerns about the effectiveness of housing first models due to unsheltered people being "too hard to house" and the unavailability of affordable units. Many stakeholders cited the need for

more treatment-based and "housing in transition" programs over housing-focused interventions as a way to resolve unsheltered homelessness. As noted in the previous section, the encampment response and emergency response components of the system (i.e. shelter, outreach) do not seem to be well-connected to the system's housing interventions (i.e. RRH, PSH). There also seems to be a shared narrative among some providers and system-level stakeholders alike that due to the challenging high-cost, low-vacancy housing market, implementing a systemwide housing first approach is extremely difficult in Santa Cruz County. However, it should be noted that despite these commonly held notions, communities across the nation have shown that a housing first orientation works when system strategies to open the door for people experiencing homelessness to the private rental market are consistently employed. These strategies and practices include (but are not necessarily limited to) implementing robust housing navigation, search, and placement, as well as landlord recruitment and engagement.

Once the SWAP work is complete, Focus Strategies will be in a better position to assess the degree to which the inventory of targeted housing interventions is appropriately sized to support the community's efforts to end homelessness. Yet, even without this analysis, we believe it is likely that the rapid rehousing and PSH inventory is not scaled to the level needed and there is a need for more resources and scaling-up of housing-focused case management, housing navigation, and landlord engagement efforts.

3. Coordinated Entry System (CES)

i. Description of Existing Smart Path Coordinated Entry System (CES)

In recent years, HUD has required that communities implement coordinated entry systems (CES) that create a single, standardized process for people who are experiencing homelessness to be assessed for and gain access to the targeted housing interventions available in the system. In accordance with federal coordinated entry requirements, Santa Cruz County implemented the Smart Path to Housing and Health (Smart Path) system. In 2018 Smart Path, people seeking assistance at a variety of different places within the homeless system are assessed using the Vulnerability Index - Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT), a commonly used assessment tool, then prioritized for available homeless-targeted housing assistance. Implementation of Smart Path represents a shift away from a previously "fragmented" system where people accessed services and housing assistance programs on a first-come, first-served basis, by personal or provider advocacy, or via a waitlist. The system is managed by the Santa Cruz County Human Services Department with oversight by the HAP.

The system design is intended to be "no wrong door," though in effect it is really a "many right doors" approach, in which about 25 agencies countywide act as access points by conducting CES assessments for some or all homeless populations. These agencies include shelter and service provider locations, mental health clinics, libraries, domestic violence and Veterans assistance programs, and public administrative offices. The system deploys around two-hundred trained assessors – a majority are not full-time assessors but have this function built into their existing role. Smart Path also integrates mobile outreach for people who are unable or unwilling to visit physical access points and recently hired four mobile assessors dedicated to specific subpopulations and geographic regions (families and transition-age youth, North and South County). Although CES policies state that people seeking assistance can access CES by calling 2-1-1, by-phone assessment is not currently available.

The VI-SPDAT generates a numeric "score" which is used to determine people's level of vulnerability or need in order to match and refer them to system resources, as they become available. Referrals are made based on program type, eligibility criteria, and individuals' assessment score and processed through the system's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). People who are referred to permanent supportive housing (PSH) programs must meet the federal chronic homelessness definition and receive a VI-SPDAT score between 8 and 17 for adults and TAY or 9 to 22 for families. Rapid rehousing (RRH) and transitional housing (TH) referrals are made to those who score between 4 and 7 for adults/TAY or 4 and 8 for families. Households with the longest histories of homelessness and who score on the high-end of these ranges are prioritized for the respective interventions, in an effort to reserve resources for those with the highest need. Once referrals are made, agencies must contact the referred household within 5 business days to begin the program entry process. Emergency shelter and other emergency response interventions are not yet integrated into Smart Path at this point; however, these components are planned to roll out in the near-term.

ii.   Assessment: Strengths and Challenges of the Coordinated Entry System (CES)

Strengths: Overall, community response to the implementation of the Smart Path system has been positive. In interviews and other engagements, stakeholders reported that there is growing momentum and buy in around CES and many expressed a desire to build up and strengthen CES as a key element of the broader homeless system. Although Smart Path is still relatively new in Santa Cruz County and providers acknowledge that there are growing pains that come with the implementation of a new system (noted in the "Challenges" section below); most people seemed confident that issues will be resolved over time and that CES has been a beneficial addition to the suite of tools in the homelessness crisis response system. CES has helped the community identify and prioritize people with the highest needs for services and housing, in a way that was not previously occurring. This has resulted in households accessing system resources they had previously been unable to (when services and housing were accessed on a "a first-come, first-serve basis"). Stakeholders acknowledged that providers are "serving people [they] haven't before," and aligning the regional system towards policy goals to prioritize vulnerable populations.

The establishment of the Smart Path system has also given providers and system planners a better sense of who is in the system and how they are or are not accessing resources, a key element in developing a more effective and targeted response to homelessness. This represents a shift towards a system that is increasingly focused on helping those with the highest needs and barriers to housing – people who previously weren't served or "creamed out." Stakeholders said this has led to greater collaboration among system players. For example, housing work groups and front-line staff have increased communication and are now coordinating on how to best serve high-needs populations and fill gaps where services are identified as deficient. When apparent gaps in service emerge, system partners now collaboratively examine how to best serve underserved and/or high-needs people or groups and work to address these issues. Stakeholders have also pointed out that data is now more available and useful as a result of CES. The creation of Smart Path has standardized the way data is collected and reported, leading to more data that can be used to analyze efficacy and understand system performance. Increased data also provides the system a better idea of who is – and in some cases, who is not – accessing the system. Some stakeholders representing other systems of care and institutions that overlap with the homeless

system also recognized CES as an opportunity to increase collaboration and coordination of services across systems.

Challenges: In our assessment, the current implementation in Santa Cruz County is very similar to the design of coordinated entry in other communities, but would benefit from a re-design to better align with best practices in the field and improve its ability to efficiently connect people who are homeless with a housing intervention. Based on our conversations with CES staff, it appears some of these improvements are in the works. Areas in need of refinement or improvement include:

- *Diversion is not yet a component of CES.* Integrating a diversion step into Smart Path will create opportunities to help people secure a no-cost or low-cost housing solution without having to go to shelter or enter a rapid rehousing or permanent housing program; thereby helping the system reserve these interventions for those who have no other options. Plans are currently underway to build diversion into CES as part of the initial assessment step. Diversion trainings for CES "line staff" are already in the works.

- *Emergency Shelter Not Integrated into CES.* Smart Path is not currently being used to fill emergency shelter beds. Integrating shelters into CES to help ensure beds are filled with people with the highest needs is planned to occur in the coming 2019/2020 Fiscal Year; which has the opportunity to be an important element of an improved unsheltered/encampment strategy.

- *Lack of Dynamic Prioritization/ Bucketed Lists.* The Smart Path system currently uses "static prioritization" in which people are assessed and then placed onto lists for specific interventions. It places people either on a list for RRH or for PSH based on their score and these lists are not permeable (i.e. people cannot move from one to the other). People who have been on the list the longest and have the highest scores are served first. This results in lists becoming stale and full of people who cannot be located, so it tends to match and refer people who are good at staying in touch with coordinated entry staff and not necessarily those with the greatest needs. Because there is not enough PSH supply to meet the needs of everyone on the PSH list, many of those households are never assisted. Meanwhile, households with lower needs and lower priority scores who are on the RRH list are receiving RRH. This leads to a situation where lower needs households are assisted before those with higher needs.

  A preferred alternative would be a dynamic prioritization strategy in which the number of prioritized people matches the availability of inventory in rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing. Households are not matched to interventions based solely on their score, but by eligibility criteria and sometimes using a case conferencing process. This results in a much shorter list of people to manage and ensures that those who are prioritized represent the highest needs households, have been recently assessed, and are easier to locate. It also eliminates long waiting lists "to nowhere." Dynamic prioritization also allows for adjustments over time as people's needs may change and may not be reflected in a single score. For this form of prioritization to be effective, however, a strong diversion component is needed to ensure that everyone in the system is offered some sort of assistance rather than being placed on a list.

- *Program Entry Barriers*. Stakeholders reported that Smart Path struggles with getting all programs to lower their barriers to entry so that highly vulnerable households can be served. Our assessment did not encompass reviewing program entry requirements, so we cannot definitively state whether this is the case. However, this is a common problem in most CES implementations. A systematic review of those program entry requirements can be an important part of coordinated entry improvement. Barriers can be too high, keeping large segments of the population from entering the programs designed to service them. They can be equally non-standard resulting in a coordinated entry that requires significant time to make placements that could be reduced with reduction in barriers and alignment of requirements. As part of the next phase, Focus Strategies can support coordinated entry staff to analyze the existing program eligibility requirements and develop a plan to lower barriers systematically.

- *Funding Challenges*. Stakeholders reported that Smart Path is underfunded. It's primary funding source is HUD CoC grant dollars and reportedly has little local investment. We are not able to independently assess whether this is the case, however.

D. Exits: Affordable Housing

To be effective, the homeless crisis response system needs a supply of housing that is affordable for people who are experiencing homelessness, and strategies to ensure they are able to access that housing. This includes a robust development pipeline that consistently adds to the affordable housing inventory through new construction and acquisition/rehabilitation of existing units. In addition, communities need a range of strategies to expand access to the existing supply of rental housing for people experiencing homelessness, such as through landlord engagement and outreach and housing search services. Housing programs and interventions specifically designed for and targeted to people experiencing homelessness to housing –rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing– are discussed in the previous section on Homeless System Interventions. This section focuses on whether the community's supply of existing built units is sufficient given the size of the homeless population.

i. Descriptions of Existing Affordable Housing Inventory

The existing stock of affordable housing in the Santa Cruz community consists of properties developed by non-profit affordable housing developers, inclusionary units created by market-rate developers, and some public housing units operated by the County's Housing Authority. The Housing Authority also has a Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program providing tenant-based rental assistance to about 4,500 households.

Like most communities in California, the community has a significant gap in the inventory of affordable housing, particularly for people at the lowest income levels. Affordability is generally defined as paying no more than 30% of income for housing related costs. Additionally, Santa Cruz County was identified as the fifth most expensive metropolitan county in the country, requiring households to earn $46.90 per hour to afford a two-bedroom apartment listed at the local Fair Market Rent (FMR). The County's FY 2019-20 & 2020-21 Operational Plan cites that 62.3% of renters in Santa Cruz County are rent burdened, spending 30% or more of their income on rent each month. The table below summarizes data on housing affordability drawn from the National Low-Income Housing Coalition.

Housing Affordability in Santa Cruz County[8]

Hourly wage necessary to afford 2 Bedroom at FMR	Local 2 Bedroom at FMR	Annual income needed to afford 2 BMR FMR	30% of Area Median Income (AMI)	Monthly Rent Affordable at 30% of AMI	Total Renter Households (2013-2017)	% of Total Households in County (2013-2017)	Average Estimated Hourly Wage of Renters (2019)	Monthly Rent Affordable at Average Renter Wage
$46.90	$2,439	$97,560	$29,400	$735	38,544	40%	$14.48	$753

The data below is from HUD's Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) database, which was most recently updated using 2010 Census data. Though this information is not as current as the data presented above, it still provides some perspective on the unaffordability of housing in Santa Cruz county.

Available Rental Housing in Santa Cruz City by Percentage of AMI[9]

Household Income Level	# of Affordable Rental Units	Total # of Renter Households	Shortage/Excess of Affordable Units
30% AMI	945	3,980	-3,305
50% AMI	2,190	2,135	-55
80% AMI	6,785	3,420	3,365
100 AMI	No available data	2,235	NA
Total	9,920	11,770	NA

Overall, the community lacks inventory of affordable rental units, especially for renters at 30 to 50% AMI. As shown above, in the City of Santa Cruz – where most unsheltered homeless people reside – there is a severe shortage of housing at the lower end of the rental market and a surplus of housing starting at the 80% AMI level. Comparably, rents generally are somewhat lower in South County, but there is still a shortage of units affordable to people below 30% AMI.

ii.   *Assessment: Strengths and Challenges of Affordable Housing Inventory*

Currently, Santa Cruz County's housing market poses significant challenges to creating new affordable housing. Barriers include the County's historic "no growth" policies, implemented to preserve much of the open space in the County and reserving building for areas that are already urbanized; loss of Redevelopment which was the primary source of local financing for affordable housing development; community resistance to development ("NIMBY"); and a general lack of awareness in the community that affordable housing is the solution to widespread homelessness and housing instability among people at the lowest income levels. Additionally, development in north parts of the county is reportedly more difficult than in the south.

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[8] Data sourced from the National Low-Income Housing Coalition's annual "Out of Reach" report. https://reports.nlihc.org/sites/default/files/oor/OOR_2019.pdf
[9] Data sourced from the HUD 2007-2011 Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy, https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/cp.html.

Despite these growth challenges, the City of Santa Cruz, under its former Redevelopment Agency, was able to add 552 affordable housing units to the market before dissolution and continues to work towards increasing affordable housing stock with its Affordable Housing Trust Fund and by leveraging State and federal financing. The City also has an inclusionary housing ordinance that recently changed from 15% to 10%. Also, notably, Watsonville's housing is generally more affordable, and the City of Watsonville has been instrumental in creating new affordable units. Watsonville maintains a local Affordable Housing Ordinance that requires new developments to include 15% to 20% of units for low-to-moderate income level households. Additionally, the County's Measure J and the City's Measure O were voter-approved initiatives that enforce inclusionary housing for all new developments countywide.

Advocates in the community attempted to pass Measure H, a housing bond that would have brought in $140 million (roughly $8 million annually) in cash infusions to invest towards local affordable housing projects or to leverage additional state funding for affordable housing. The measure failed in November 2018, falling short of the two-thirds majority vote needed. If passed, the Measure would have divvied funds among the four cities and unincorporated areas of the County to fund affordable housing – including units designated for people experiencing homelessness and in need of supportive services. As various bills work their way through the State and local legislature, community players are looking at opportunities to leverage potential funding to build and expand affordable housing options in the community.

Our conversations with affordable housing developers and housing providers revealed an appetite for building affordable units for people experiencing homelessness and a willingness to work with local government to move towards solutions to increase supply. Similarly, conversations with funders indicate that many agree with the need to increase affordable housing stock. Some funders noted their willingness to put dollars towards efforts to increase housing options for low-income households, if more clear direction and strategic planning were undertaken. Even as the local jurisdictions are faced with restrictions around expanding housing, players crucial to the development and funding of affordable units express a willingness – and in some cases, eagerness – to make strides towards positive social impact and housing solutions for those at the lowest income levels or who are experiencing homelessness.

Tackling the lack of affordable housing will be critical if Santa Cruz County is to end or significantly reduce homelessness. Ultimately, creating a pipeline of new development affordable for those at the lowest income levels will require significant political will, in addition to resources. In our assessment, mustering this level of political commitment will be challenging. Some stakeholders we talked to expressed some optimism that as homelessness becomes increasingly visible and high-priority for community members, there has been some increasingly palpable "YIMBYism" in the community. As homelessness has become an ever-more visible crisis, people are reportedly becoming more open to the idea of affordable housing development and recognizing the link between increased affordable housing and reductions in homelessness. However, other stakeholders were more pessimistic about the possibilities for increased affordable housing production. Many said that NIMBYism and negative stereotypes towards people experiencing homelessness drive community perceptions and are "baked into" local politics, ultimately preventing affordable housing projects from being approved. At least one city we talked with was disinterested in playing a role in expanding housing, seeing this as a potentially infinite need.

Other topics that surfaced during the assessment process were questions about whether private vacation rentals are reducing the availability of market-rate rental units. Some feel local governments must take a stronger position on retaining housing supply for residents – particularly, low-income residents – and curb the number of vacation and second homes. Some stakeholders also expressed a belief that UC Santa Cruz is a major contributor to the shortage of market-rate housing at the lowest income levels. Our assessment did not extend to delving into these issues, so Focus Strategies is not able to say with any certainty how much either of these factors are impacting the availability of rental units.

E. Data and Evaluation Capacity

i. *Description of Data and Evaluation Systems*

The primary data system supporting analysis of the homeless system in Santa Cruz County is the Homeless Management information System (HMIS). The HAP, as the CoC governing body, has selected Community Technology Alliance (CTA) as the HMIS lead entity. CTA is the system administrator and contracts with the HMIS vendor, Bitfocus. In addition to serving as the central database for targeted homeless system programs (shelter, housing), the HMIS is used to manage most of the CES functions, including assessment, matching, and referral. Historically, the Santa Cruz CoC has struggled to have strong participation of homeless system providers in the HMIS. The addition of CES spurred more providers to enter data into HMIS; however, the HMIS coverage rate remains below national standards. In the most recent CoC competition, the community lost points in the scoring of the application due to problems with HMIS coverage.

The County has been a key leader and supporter of the countywide CORE Investments initiative, which included developing standard outcome measures to track the impact of a range of social services and community factors. "Housing and homelessness" is one of the categories for which CORE will establish high level multi-year outcome tracking. The County's CAO office has been participating in these conversations and efforts are being made to align the factors that will be tracked on homelessness with the type of goals that are expected to be part of the homeless system improvement process.

ii. *Assessment: Strengths and Challenges of Data and Evaluation*

Our assessment of Santa Cruz' homeless system data and evaluation capacity points to it as one of the community's most significant challenges and an area in need of significant improvement. While the community has a HUD-compliant database, it appears that to a great extent required data goes into the HMIS but there is little capacity for using the data to understand system performance, inform planning, and develop strategic direction. The focus of activity appears to be on meeting HUD requirements for data collection and general reporting (e.g. generating required Annual Performance Report (APRs) and system performance reports), but not on using performance measurement for local program or system improvement.

A key factor underlying the lack of using data for system planning is structural. The HAP currently performs many data-driven duties including looking at data and using it for evaluation, system planning and design, developing funding priorities, and communicating statuses to the community. However, data responsibilities are divided between the HAP (as CoC governing body), the County (as CoC lead and Collaborative Applicant), CTA, and Bitfocus – with the respective roles and responsibilities of each entity

somewhat unclear. The community looks to CTA as the "lead" for issues relating to data, but CTA is not a decision-making or policy-setting entity. These structural issues tie back to the same problems the community has identified with its overall governance structure – the lack of a clear single entity or set of entities responsible for overall homeless system planning. Should an entity be identified to take on this role, appropriate staffing capacity within that agency/organization is critical. Bolstering data and evaluation capacity will likely require hiring additional staff to ensure sufficient bandwidth exists to fulfil the responsibilities of a system planning lead.

Data analysis, evaluation, and performance measurement are all critical components of system planning – activities that currently do not have an identified home in the homeless system structure. In our discussions with providers, it also appears that many are unfamiliar with data-driven performance measurement – only a few appear to be using any of their own HMIS data to assess their project performance and to inform changes to their programs.

Additional data challenges that were surfaced during our interviews and conversations include that the HMIS system is under-funded. Our assessment work did not include a review of the HMIS budget, but it does seem clear that a perceived lack of funding resources to support HMIS is a source of concern and tension in the community. A recent shift in policy to requiring participation fees from providers has been difficult to implement because of difficulty collecting the agreed upon fees. Another concern that came up repeatedly is the perception that the data in the HMIS is of poor quality. Focus Strategies will be assessing data quality as part of the SWAP work in the next phase.

The CORE effort to track outcome-related data on a variety of social and community indicators is likely to support the need for improved data collection and utilization within the homeless arena, though at the time of this baseline assessment, the CORE outcomes were focused at a community (population) level. Focus Strategies will continue to provide guidance and recommendations to the CORE consultants as they identify program-level outcomes and indicators that will be used to improve outcomes and direct investments. Such performance measures may include the rate of entry into programs from unsheltered situations (targeting), the rate that people return to homelessness after a housing placement, or cost effectiveness of homeless system programs (e.g. cost per permanent housing placement). Alignment between CORE's higher-level indicators and the more detailed measures to be used by the homeless system itself will be important to ensure that public messaging is consistent, and that funders and providers are in agreement about the most important factors to evaluate the community's impact.

F.   Other System Components and Topics

Additional topics that have surfaced as part of this baseline assessment phase are described below.

1.   *Geographic Equity*

A frequent theme of our interviews and conversations with stakeholders was the issue of geographic disparities – both in terms of where people experiencing homelessness are living as well as where programs and services are located. The general view is that the overall system is "Santa Cruz centric," meaning that the northern area of the county, particularly the City of Santa Cruz, receives a disproportionate share of resources due to the large and visible homeless population there. Some stakeholders expressed that homelessness in South County receives less attention due to the population

being less visible. There is also a feeling that the South County is "disconnected" from the larger region due to the County functions all being in Santa Cruz. South County has a somewhat separate network of providers who meet and collaborate independently on local efforts. For the past three years, the County Homeless Services Coordinator and the City of Watsonville have co-convened a South County Steering Committee to begin to more formally address the needs in South County.

Focus Strategies has heard two different sets of opinions about the allocation of resources between north and south counties. Some stakeholders feel there should be more equity in how resources are allocated, advocating that the South County needs more services and more shelter beds to serve people experiencing homelessness in the area, and that they are underfunded relative to their need. However, others expressed concerns that adding more resources and shelter beds will create a "magnet" effect and draw more people to the region. Some expressed a view that the recent transition of the Salvation Army shelter to a year-round operation (it was formerly seasonal) has already led to an increase in the numbers of people experiencing homelessness in South County. We do not have enough information to objectively assess whether there are geographic equity issues – this will be further explored in the next phase of this project. The County's Operational Plan, however, sets goals to expand resources including homeless navigation and supportive housing in both the north and south regions of the county.[10] The plan states, that "by June 2021, Homeless Services Coordination will work with the Homeless Action Partnership to plan and open year-round homeless services centers in North and South County" and "Health Services will increase the number of supported housing beds sited throughout the county for homeless adults with mental illness by 20 beds from the baseline calendar year 2018."

Another geographic disparity issue relates to the availability of housing. Rents are significantly lower in South County and there are more landlords willing to accept rent subsidies, so many of the households that can secure rental subsidies are living in South County. We also heard that South County is more open to development but also bears more of the burden of affordable housing development than the north – though we have not analyzed any data to assess the validity of this perception.

2. *Homeless Subpopulations*

This baseline assessment is primarily focused on the overall homeless system and does not delve deeply into the specific subpopulations of people experiencing homelessness. As part of the next phase of work, we will gather information that will allow us to look at the system's performance in relation to different subpopulations, and in particular the difference in performance for programs serving families with children versus programs serving adults and transition age youth (TAY).

Two themes that emerged from our information gathering that warrant further exploration in the next phase include:

- *Homeless Youth* – Stakeholders generally expressed positive views of recent efforts to address youth homelessness and are optimistic that the Youth Homeless Demonstration Program grant will yield positive results. This is an area where we observed that there is a strong effort to integrate the voices of people with lived experience into the planning of the YHDP

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[10] https://sccounty01.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/Operational_Plan_2019-21/Operational_Plan_2019-21_complete.pdf

implementation. The HAP recently voted to add a Youth Advisory Board (YAB) member to the HAP Board. Specific efforts to address youth homelessness is a strength, as youth experiencing homelessness follow somewhat different patterns from adults and often report feeling unwelcome or uncomfortable in services designed for adults. However, we caution that the efforts to address youth homelessness should not become disconnected from the broader system picture and that connections between youth and adult providers and programs are essential. Elements of the YHDP planning process may be able to be built upon in the creation of a more coordinated overall system.

- *Veterans* – Stakeholders expressed that there is a well-coordinated system for addressing veteran homelessness and a wealth of resources for veterans. The PIT count shows that veteran homelessness has gone down significantly since 2017, though there was also a significant rise between 2015 and 2017. As with the youth focused work, some of the coordination effort that has been made to better address Veteran homelessness may be useful to build upon in the development of further collaboration across the system and for other populations.

3. Homeless System and Mainstream Service System Collaboration

The County of Santa Cruz oversees most mainstream service systems, including health, behavioral health, foster care, criminal justice, employment, and public benefits. All these systems are serving people experiencing homelessness. We heard of a number of County-led initiatives designed to better serve this population and the countywide Operational Plan outlines key goals and strategies for addressing homelessness, which are largely focused on expanding emergency response and prevention services. The plan sets the overarching goal of expanding "services to reduce homelessness and increase housing stability" by expanding emergency shelter capacity, supporting "transition to permanent housing," and focusing on "proven prevention and housing stability strategies." Other objectives outlined in the countywide plan include bolstering homeless crisis response through new State dollars, conducting assessments through Smart Path for at least 1,600 people countywide, increasing the rate at which people exit the homeless system to permanent housing, and reducing the three-year recidivism rate for the AB 109 population (those on probation).

Additionally, the County CAO has been convening a County Homeless Coordinating Committee to begin aligning the work of these different departments around a shared strategy to address homelessness. This work is still in its initial stages and the Committee is looking to this technical assistance process with Focus Strategies as an opportunity to set some strategic direction for their work. Key issues they have identified include strategies to reduce institutional discharge into homelessness, expanding housing and other placement options for people with behavioral health issues, and cross system data matching.

VI. Implications of Assessment and Interim Recommendations

The primary purpose of this baseline assessment is to identify the "current state" of the homeless crisis response system in Santa Cruz County and serve as a starting place for the next round of analysis and system planning.

Overall, we found that the Santa Cruz community has a significant homeless problem relative to its population. Funding, functioning, and the size of the homeless crisis response system is not at the scale or

level of alignment and coordination needed to begin to reverse current trends. However, many essential system elements are in place and function fairly well, giving local stakeholders a good foundation to build upon. System strengths include a range of emergency responses (outreach, emergency shelter and services) that respond to the basic needs of people experiencing homelessness and, in some cases, operate with strong housing-focused intention. Rapid re-housing inventory is increasing. Permanent housing interventions targeted to people experiencing homeless are few but seem to be relatively well designed and targeted. Coordinated entry is well-established and accepted within the community and has led to improvements in the availability of data on people experiencing homelessness. The HAP is recognized as the primary forum for stakeholders to engage in dialogue on homelessness and has been successful in its role as coordinator of HUD CoC mandated data gathering and planning. There is a strong track record of collaboration between stakeholders.

A few key programmatic pieces are missing from the system – most notably a strong diversion/problem-solving practice that can work to reduce inflow of people into homelessness. At the system level, well-informed members of the community actively participate in efforts to reduce homelessness and many examples of successful coordination exist. However, a much more robust system-wide alignment around priorities and goals, capacity for data-driven decision making, and a more refined and robust governance and implementation structure is needed. This includes increased staffing capacity throughout select areas of the system to see goals to fruition. Without these elements in place Santa Cruz cannot be said to have a fully realized homeless crisis response system in which all the parts work together toward a common set of measurable goals. And without such a system, progress on reducing homelessness will remain elusive.

The work Focus Strategies will conduct over the next twelve months will deepen the understanding of what is currently working and can be built upon, identify where there are important investment gaps, and define a homeless crisis response with clear goals, structures, and measurable outcomes. Leadership and key stakeholders will use this information to develop a strategic direction and action plan for homeless system efforts moving forward.

In the short-term, Focus Strategies is providing the community with suggested initial strategies that could be developed and implemented immediately to help jump-start improvements to the homeless crisis response while the next phase of analytic and system re-design work is taking place. These include three improvements targeted at a programmatic gap or need, and the launching of the new governance structure. Focus Strategies is also developing a suggested set of implementation steps that the County, cities, providers, and other stakeholders can undertake immediately to begin acting collaboratively to implement these interim recommendations – in a Short-Term Action Plan that accompanies this report. Implementing any of these interim recommendations will take time as well as human and financial resources to support. One of the main obstacles to date that has prevented the Santa Cruz community from undertaking a more system-focused response is the lack of dedicated staffing and infrastructure to support system level work. Focus Strategies can and will provide consulting and technical assistance to support the implementation of the interim recommendations, should the community choose to move forward with some or all of them. However, leadership will need to prioritize either the time of existing staff to drive implementation or identify resources to increase staff capacity to carry these out.

A. Recommended Short-Term System Improvements

1. *Implement a Systemwide Diversion Practice to Reduce Inflow*. As noted, the homeless crisis response system in Santa Cruz County currently lacks a robust effort to reduce inflow through diversion or problem-solving practices. Some efforts are underway to add diversion to CES and begin training providers in this approach. We would advise fast-tracking implementation of a diversion/problem-solving approach and scaling it up as rapidly as possible. Ideally, the initial implementation will include availability of a pool of flexible funding for households that are able to identify an immediate housing solution that requires some level of financial assistance to enact. This can include traditional expenses such as application fees and security deposits or more flexible uses of resources for things such as grocery cards or furniture that can allow a person to make a contribution to the household hosting them. Other essential elements of standing up a systemwide diversion practice include regular and ongoing training, as well as peer-to-peer learning (such as a learning collaborative) and a method for collecting data on diversion to track impact. Diversion should be practiced at any place where people experiencing homelessness or a housing crisis contact the system seeking support, which includes at least the CES system and shelters, as well as offered on a mobile basis by training outreach teams in this approach.

To complement the work on diversion, we also recommend moving forward quickly with efforts to re-tool Smart Path and shift toward dynamic prioritization. Currently, Smart Path puts everyone on a list to wait for a housing intervention, which tends to incentivize people to wait, believing they will someday receive a long-term housing subsidy, even when the likelihood for most is very small. Shifting to dynamic prioritization and letting people know in real-time whether or not they will be prioritized for a housing intervention will be critical to making diversion/problem-solving the primary intervention that the system has to offer to people who are not among the highest need group. It will also streamline the rehousing process for those who are prioritized, as the number of people who are designated as priority aligns with the inventory available. This will shift the system away from one in which nearly everyone is waiting to one where prioritized people and households move quickly to a homeless system-provided resolution and others are supported to find an alternative with the understanding that they will not receive a subsidy or other deep resource from the homeless crisis response system.

2. *Build Capacity of Emergency Shelters to Deliver Housing-Focused Services and Supports.* Our assessment shows that the existing shelter providers in the community are already taking steps to integrate services that help residents move from shelter to housing. Given that the siting issues relating to new navigation centers will likely be protracted, a good short-term strategy will be to identify ways to build up the capacity of existing shelters to become more housing-focused and speed up the rate at which they are helping residents exit to housing. A good first step would be to convene a shelter working group with representation from the shelters and primary funders of shelter to identify what is already working and needs expanding, as well as to develop common standards and approaches for shelters and navigation centers. This could include: (1) inventory of entry requirements in place at shelters currently; (2) developing plans to lower barriers or align practices; and (3) identifying what resources and training shelters need to help more people with self-resolution, lighter touch housing support, and/or connections to RRH/PSH. Products from this work could include the creation of a shared set of shelter practice guidelines, a training curriculum for shelter staff, and/or seeding a new pool of flexible resources available either within shelters or accessible by shelters for immediate housing solutions.

3. *Coordinate and Standardize Outreach Efforts:* Santa Cruz has a number of entities conducting outreach to unsheltered people but there is currently no formal coordination of these efforts, agreed upon goals, shared protocols, consistent data collection, or common outcome measures. Over the long-term, the Santa Cruz community needs a proactive strategy for addressing encampments and unsheltered homelessness as part of the creation of a systematic response to homelessness. Such a strategy would target a reduction in unsheltered homelessness and reduce the impacts on the people living outside as well as on the broader community. This will be a significant undertaking that will need the new governance and implementation structure to be in place in order to be successful. In the interim, we recommend that stakeholders begin working immediately on coordination and alignment of outreach efforts. The agencies with outreach teams and their key funders should come together to share information about how they currently function, who they typically see, and develop agreements on a coordinated approach to the purpose, methods, desired measurable outcomes and geographic coverage across all outreach efforts. This will be a useful interim step that will ensure outreach is efficiently deployed and connected to the rest of the system and prepare the way toward a more comprehensive approach to unsheltered homelessness.

B.   Governance Recommendations

As noted in the assessment section of this report, Focus Strategies has reviewed the work of the Homeless Governance Study Committee. In our view, this group was grappling with a set of questions that it is critical for the community to resolve. The recommendations from that effort propose a workable structure that could act as a backbone for a new system approach. However, key questions about its authority, relationship to other entities, and how it will make and communicate decisions remain to be answered.

We recommend that this group be "reconvened" in the Fall. The original membership had representation from all the essential sectors (County, cities, HAP, providers, business community), so it could reconvene with the original members (depending on their availability) or a similar group. The only sector not represented in the original Committee was private funders and there was no one with lived experience of homelessness – these are two slots that we would recommend be added. The County CAO's office should continue to serve as the convener as it is the agency currently resourced to serve as the staffing support for the HAP (the existing governance structure) and because the County is the only public entity whose work relating to homelessness spans the entire county geography. However, to address concerns that the governance work is not overly County-centric, we recommend designating Focus Strategies as the outside expert and facilitator of the work. Design and facilitation of the work group meetings, preparation of materials in between meetings, and helping guide the group to a set of decisions about the proposal structure is all within the scope of our TA engagement.

To ensure that the process does not halt again or cease to make progress, we recommend a set of facilitated meetings designed to pick up from the work of the study group, including building out the basic recommendations for a leadership body (IPC), a funder coordination entity (likely a restructured Jurisdictional Coordination Group), and broader membership group (built on the current HAP).

This process will answer critical questions about how the structure will operate, what purview it will have, and what resources and efforts it will jointly oversee. We recommend a series of 4 to 5 meetings taking

place between September and November 2019. We will design and facilitate a set of agendas to address the following topics, building from each meeting to arrive at agreement on a new governing structure, how it will function and make decisions, what specific funding sources it will oversee or coordinate/align, and how it will communicate decisions to the larger membership and the public.

1. *Policy Setting/Strategic Direction/Establishing Priorities*. Using currently proposed changes to the landscape, such as the need to made decisions about the interim recommendations we have outlined above, work through the development of a decision-making process for the IPC/leadership entity. This will include determining how local data on current system performance is brought in to develop strategic direction and set policy priorities, how HAP and other community input - particularly from those experiencing homelessness - is gathered in a timely fashion and integrated in decision making, as well as setting the boundaries of how such strategic directions and policy decisions are or are not binding on leadership members (such as the county or cities). This step will result in parameters for decision making at the leadership level that drive toward well-defined priorities and buy-in to a strategic direction with mutual accountability.

2. *Funding Alignment and Funder Coordination Structure*. Building from the progress made to establish strategic priorities, the process will need to identify the resources and funder entities that will work together to invest in the strategic changes. This includes establishing a specific funder coordination body and determining the shared process for either pooling funding or aligning funding processes and folding in identified priorities to the funding process of the County, cities, and philanthropy. This should also include creating a process and structures to ensure all funding decisions are targeted and strategic, made by non-conflicted parties, are clearly understood by all stakeholders to be fair and transparent. Proposals making their way through the State legislature might result in new funding being divided among the County, the City of Santa Cruz or other cities, and the HAP as the CoC. This part of the process should consider how a proposed funder coordination structure and funding alignment approach will ensure that those dollars are spent strategically and in alignment with each other. The process should ensure new resources compliment and leverage other resources currently in the system and refine the recommendations for a coordinated funder structure to reflect this.

3. *CoC Compliance*. Once the strategic direction, parameters of leadership roles, and funder coordination are outlined, Focus Strategies will facilitate a discussion designed to resolve any potential CoC compliance issues raised by the proposed structure. Some current HAP members noted that the previously proposed membership for the IPC does not necessarily meet all of HUD's requirements relating to broad representation of stakeholder groups. The final structure needs to ensure that the CoC-specific functions, as well as other decisions, are reviewed by a broader-based group such as the HAP general membership or a subset of that entity. At the same time, leadership should ensure that the overarching governance body, which is tasked to make decisions about a broader set of resources (not just the CoC), can act and is non-conflicted.

4. *Communication and Transparency*. Ensuring that considerations are shared, and decisions are communicated to the broader community is essential to the new structure and its ability to create buy-in from stakeholders. The funder group should launch by creating a funding inventory report that

lays out all the funding sources currently going into addressing homelessness, the resulting amounts, what they are expended on, how those decisions are made, and the results (if known). This could be a baseline report that then helps inform system planning going forward and will help with refining the governance structure. In addition, agreements about how decisions will be captured, disseminated in a timely fashion to interested parties, and how results will be evaluated over time must be made as well.

The end result of this reconvened governance process will be agreement on the new structure, including protocols and procedures for the items noted above. Focus Strategies will document the agreements in a written governance proposal to be presented and approved by all relevant decision-making bodies.

Ultimately supporting the final governance structure will require dedicated staffing. One key question for the system's leader and funders will be about what they can provide to support the structure and system. As work proceeds on the administrative structure, Focus Strategies will help produce estimates of staffing needs and methods to support them.

C.   Issues for Further Exploration in the Next Phase of TA

As noted throughout this report, the information gathering process surfaced several questions that Focus Strategies is not yet equipped to answer without further information and analysis. Below we list a few topics that are high priorities to explore in the next phase of TA; when the results of the SWAP project performance and system performance analysis are complete:

- Does the community have enough year-round shelter?
- How much RRH and PSH is needed to right-size the system?
- If more RRH and voucher-based PSH/AH is created, is there enough rental inventory to absorb it?
- What is the quality of the data in the HMIS system?
- Are there significant barriers in housing and shelter programs? And, if so, can these be lowered and entry requirements standardized?

Appendix A
List of Interview Participants

Name	Title	Organization	Interview Date
Cynthia Chase	Manager, Division of Re-Entry	Sheriff's Office, County of Santa Cruz	May 22, 2019
Peter Connery	Consultant	Applied Survey Research	May 13, 2019
Julie Conway	CoC Lead Agency, Collaborative Applicant	County of Santa Cruz	May 17, 2019
Joseph Crottogini	Homeless Persons Health Project Manager	County of Santa Cruz	May 9, 2019
MariaElena De La Garza	Executive Director	Community Action Board	May 31, 2019
Tony Gardner	CoC Consultant	Tony Gardner Consulting	May 29, 2019
Serg Kagno	Community Advocate/Consultant	Community Volunteer	May 15, 2019
Don Lane	CoC Board Member	Smart Solutions to Homelessness	May 20, 2019
Harold Laubach	Winter Shelter Operator	Salvation Army	May 24, 2019
Kathleen McCarthy	Funder, Health Care Systems	Central California Alliance for Health	May 28, 2019
Brooke Newman	Program Manager	Downtown Streets Team	May 21, 2019
Jennifer Panetta	Executive Director	Santa Cruz County Housing Authority	May 20, 2019
Kalyne Renda	Executive Director	Monarch Services	May 10, 2019
Erik Riera	Director, Behavioral Health Services	County of Santa Cruz	May 31, 2019
Bob Russell	CoC, HMIS Lead Agency	Community Technology Alliance	May 13, 2019
Jessica Scheiner	CoC, Coordinated Entry Lead Agency	County of Santa Cruz	May 17, 2019
Jon Showalter	Chair of the Board	Association of Faith Communities	May 10, 2019
Christine Sippl	YHDP Lead	Encompass	May 28, 2019
Susan True	Executive Director	Santa Cruz Community Foundation	June 5, 2019
Melisa Vierra	Executive Director	Families in Transition	May 17, 2019
Betsy Wilson	Executive Director	MidPen Housing	May 15, 2019
Jessie Woolf	Regional Site Director	Veterans Resource Center	May 23, 2019

Group/Organization	Participants	Interview Date
Homeless Action Partnership	Homeless Action Partnership Members	April 17, 2019
Community Organizations Meeting	Representatives of Organizations	April 17, 2019
City of Santa Cruz	City Staff	May 1, 2019
County of Santa Cruz	County Staff and Executive Leadership	May 1, 2019
Homeless Garden Project	People with Lived Experience, Homeless Garden Project Staff	May 7, 2019
North County Service Providers	Service Providers in North Santa Cruz County	May 7, 2019
Homeless Service Center	Homeless Service Center Staff	May 7, 2019
CORE Project	Nicole Young and Rayne Marr	May 7, 2019
Salvation Army	Salvation Army Staff	May 8, 2019
Salvation Army	People with Lived Experience	May 8, 2019
South County Service Providers	Service Providers in South Santa Cruz County	May 8, 2019
City of Capitola	City Staff	May 23, 2019
City of Watsonville	City Staff	May 24, 2019
City of Scotts Valley	City Staff	June 27, 2019

Appendix C
List of Documents Reviewed

To understand the work accomplished, currently in place, and planned in Santa Cruz County to reduce homelessness, Focus Strategies requested and received the following documents from the County of Santa Cruz. The documents help establish a baseline understanding of Santa Cruz County homelessness reduction efforts prior to Focus Strategies engaging in work with the community.

A. System Overview

The following documents relate to system workflow including strategic plans, policy manuals, procedures, reports, surveys, and program materials.

Program Information and Background Documents: *All In* Strategic Plan, Youth Homeless Demonstration Program Plan, 2019 HEAP and CESH Awards, 2019 YHDP Awards, CESH Outcomes Logic Model Template, HEAP and CESH Budget Template, HEAP and CESH RFP Scoring Tool.

Program Reports: 2015-17 Performance Measures Report, Homeless System Modeling Discussion Guide, Homeless Census and Survey Comprehension,

Applications and Request for Proposals: SCCYHDP Innovative Proposals, 2018 CoC Application, HEAP and CESH RFP, HEAP and CESH Applications Received, RFP Selection Process, Abode HEAP and CESH Application, MidPen HEAP and CESH Application.

B. Homelessness Governance and Leadership Documents

Focus Strategies has reviewed the following documents relating to responsibilities, inter-entity relations, membership, and desired outcomes related to governance structures in Santa Cruz County.

Responsibilities, Membership, and Organizational Charts: Governance Pyramid, HAP Governance Change Chart, HAP Governance Chart, HAP Organizational Chart, HAP Organizational Tree, Santa Cruz CoC Governance Charter, CoC HAP Governance Charter, IPC Membership Proposals, HGSC Membership.

Visions, Goals, and Workplans for Governance: Ad-Hoc Governance Study Update, Results of Problem Statement Matrix Exercise, Background of Interagency Governance, CoC Draft Charter Comments, CoC Countywide Comparison, Committee Inputs for HAP Executive Review, Enhancing Leadership and Collaboration, Presentation on HGSC Strengths and Weaknesses, Notes to Self on Governance, Success Mapped to HAP Governance, What Success Looks Like for Homeless Governance.

C. Funding and Investment Documents

The following documents highlight funding models and rationale that govern some homelessness investments in Santa Cruz County.

Collective Results and Evidence-based Investment (CORE) Model: Overview of CORE Investments, CORE Results Preliminary Scan Matrix and Strategic Plans, CORE Investments Matrix, CORE Investment Status Report, CORE Impact Report.

Quantitative information from Santa Cruz County and other communities was used to provide context and lightly inform our qualitative analysis of the local homelessness crisis response system. The following is a list of data sources to use as part of this assessment report.

Santa Cruz County Resources: 2015-19 Housing Inventory Count, 2015-2019 Point In Time Count, 2007-11 Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy, HUD System Performance Measure Results, 2017 Santa Cruz County Homeless Census and Survey.

Non-Santa Cruz County Resources: San Francisco Point In Time Count, Alameda County Point In Time Count, San Diego Point In Time Count, Santa Clara County Point In Time Count, National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI).

The following diagram provides an overview of our approach to understanding "flow" through key elements of the homeless crisis response system. It shows that all parts within the system should seamlessly work together to assist people experiencing housing crises into permanent housing, whether that housing be within or outside of the system inventory. Emergency shelter may be an interim "step" along a household's journey from homelessness to housing, however, it is the primary focus or long-term "destination" of the system and is strongly connected to permanent housing exits. This system framework guides the thinking behind our work and this baseline assessment. As we discuss strengths and challenges, we are reviewing these against what is needed for a high-functioning system model.
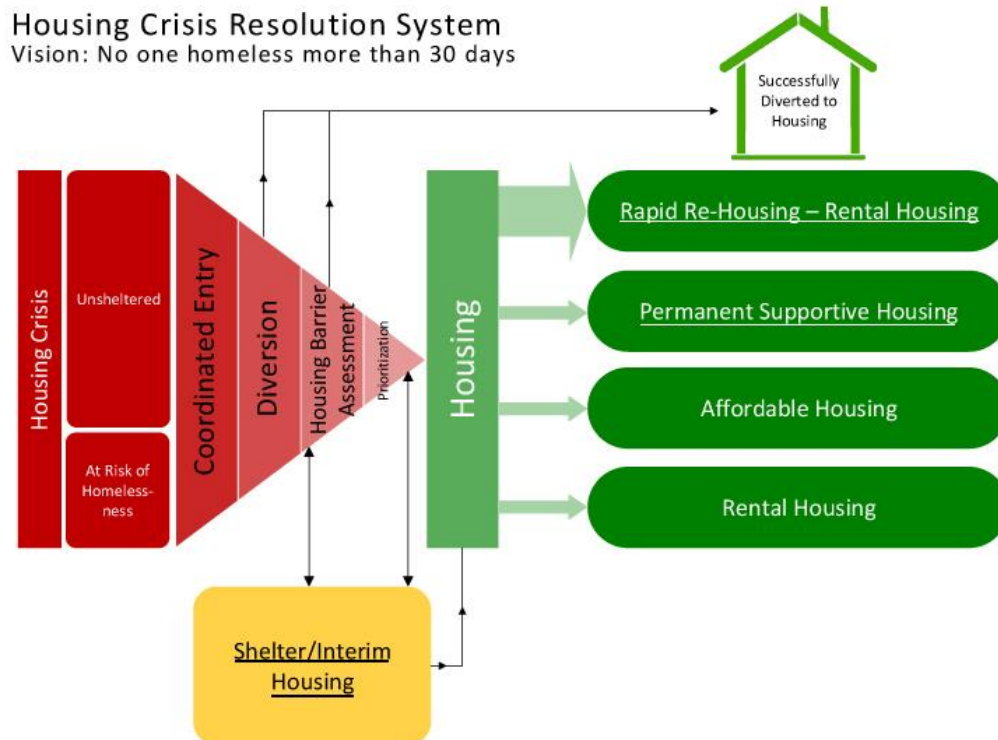
Housing Crisis Resolution System
Vision: No one homeless more than 30 days

The following table outlines system capacity in Santa Cruz county as described in the 2019 Housing Inventory Count (HIC) submitted to HUD by the HAP. The table is broken down by service provider, project, and the number of beds available in a specified project. Numbers of beds reflects the point-in-time bed count on the night the inventory was compiled in January 2019.

Provider	Project	# of Beds
Emergency Shelter		
Association of Faith Communities	Rotating Shelter	20
Encompass Community Services	River Street Shelter	32
Front Street, Inc.	Paget Center	12
Homeless Services Center	Paul Lee Loft Shelter	40
	Rebele Family Shelter	90
	Recuperative Care Center	12
Jesus Mary and Joseph Home	Jesus Mary and Joseph Home Shelter	12
Monarch Services	Domestic Violence Shelter	18
New Life Community Services	NLCS Emergency Shelter	5
Pajaro Valley Shelter Services	Parajo Valley Shelter	28
Salvation Army	North County AFC Winter Shelter	110
	South County Winter Shelter	50
Siena House	Pregnant Women Shelter	10
	Total Emergency Shelter Beds	**439**
Transitional Housing		
Encompass Community Services	FUP Vouchers	13
	Perlman House	4
	SCAP	6
	THP Plus	15
Homeless Services Center	Page Smith Community House	40
Pajaro Valley Shelter Services	Sudden Street TH & Family TH	64
	Transitional Housing Annex	16
Santa Cruz Housing Authority	Brommer Street	18
New Life	Gemma Residential	6
	Total Transitional Housing Beds	**182**
Rapid Rehousing		
Families in Transition	CHAMP	38
	ESG Rapid Rehousing	11
	First Step-Scattered Housing for Families with Children	29
	Home TBRA Rapid Rehousing	7
	Santa Cruz County Planning Home	10
	Welfare-to-Work Housing Scholarship Program	11
	Welfare-to-Work Short-Term Rental Subsidies	18
	Young Adults Achieving Success, YHDP RRH 2.0	3
Homeless Services Center	ESG Rapid Rehousing	22

Provider	Project	# of Beds
	SSVF – HSC	13
Veteran Resource Center	SSVF – Veterans Resource Center	42
Total Rapid Rehousing Beds		**204**
Permanent Supportive Housing		
County Mental Health	PH for Mental Disabilities	5
Encompass Community Services	Freedom Cottage	4
	Grace Commons	14
	Housing for Health 2	7
	Housing for Health 3	13
Homeless Persons Health Project	Bonus PSH	7
	MATCH Housing	42
	Nuevo Sol	11
Santa Cruz Housing Authority	Housing Voucher for CH Medically Vulnerable	120
	New Beginnings	9
	News Roots YHDP	4
	S+C Program	41
	VASH Santa Cruz County Program	303
Total Permanent Supportive Housing Beds		**580**

Short Term Action Plan

Activities	Timeline	Assigned Entities/People/Roles - 3 columns			Deliverable or Result
		Lead/Convener	Staff/TA	Participant(s)	
Work Area 1: Systemwide Diversion and CES Refinement					
A. Identify resources for Diversion flex funds	Sept. 2019	CAO	Focus Strategies	N/A	Work group has some dedicated resources/budget to shape their planning/design work
B. Conduct broad-based education workshops on Diversion (what it is, why do it, how it advances homeless system goals)	Sept. 2019	HSD or CAO	Focus Strategies	Homeless providers, other systems, funders, others	Help build community understanding and support for this approach
C. Convene Diversion and CE policy work group - series of small design meetings	Sept. 2019	SmartPath Staff	Focus Strategies	SmartPath staff	
Hold 2-3 meetings and conference calls with SmartPath staff to discuss: establishing goals for Diversion in SCZ, what would success look like (define results), how diversion would fit in Smartpath flow and other places in the system, develop draft policies and procedures, diversion conversation guide, training plan, flex funds procedures,	By. Oct. 15	SmartPath Staff	Focus Strategies	SmartPath staff	Written list of goals/desired results, Flow chart of SCZ homeless system with diversion integrated, written description of diversion as a system practice in SCZ, written draft of policies, tools, training plan
In parallel with Diversion work; hold 2-3 meetings or conference calls wit Smart Path staff to develop proposed CES design refinements: analyze inventory and numbers of opening in 60-90 days, develop new procedures for generating priority list, identifying and finding top scoring households, case conferencing; policies for serving higher need households in RRH, what resources are needed?, expand fluidity across program types.	By Nov. 15	SmartPath Staff	Focus Strategies	SmartPath staff	Revised draft CES Policies and timeline/plan for input, revision and adoption

Short Term Action Plan

Activities	Timeline	Assigned Entities/People/Roles - 3 columns			Deliverable or Result
		Lead/Convener	Staff/TA	Participant(s)	
D. Convene broader working group and hold 2-3 meetings to refine Diversion and CES plan, develop implementation timeline, messaging strategy, etc.	December	SmartPath Staff	Focus Strategies	Providers, other TBD	Refined policies and procedures, messaging materials, implementation timeline
Work Area 2: Housing-Focused Shelter					
A. Identify resources for housing-focused services in shelters	Sept. 2019	CAO	Focus Strategies	N/A	Work group has some dedicated resources/budget to shape their planning/design work
B. Convene shelter client input group to gather input on shelter experience, what would help them secure housing faster	Sept. 2019	TBD	Focus Strategies	People living in shelters	Recommendations for making shelter more effective at exiting people to housing; more responsive to resident needs
C. Convene shelter work group	Sept. 2019	Community Provider TBD	Focus Strategies	Shelter providers, shelter funders	
Meeting 1: Level setting; overview of best practices in housing-focused shelter; mapping what currently exists in SCZ, establish goals and what success would look like for SCZ shelter system as a whole, performance measures	By Sept. 15	Community Provider TBD	Focus Strategies	Shelter providers, shelter funders	Detailed inventory of existing shelter programs, including their service models, entry requirements, staffing, etc.
Meeting 2: System design work - What is the gap between where shelters are now and where they need to go - staffing needs, changes to entry requirements changes to policies and practices, availability of resources for clients (e.g. flex funds)	By Oct. 15	Community Provider TBD	Focus Strategies	Shelter providers, shelter funders	Agreement on shared policies, practices, guidelines for shelter operations; agreement on performance expectations
Meeting 3: Develop policies, procedures and training plan (draft common set of overarching policies for shelters, minimum training required for all shelter staff)	By Nov. 15	Community Provider TBD	Focus Strategies	Shelter providers, shelter funders	Written draft of shared policies and procedures

Short Term Action Plan

Activities	Timeline	Assigned Entities/People/Roles - 3 columns			Deliverable or Result
		Lead/Convener	Staff/TA	Participant(s)	
Meeting 4: Develop "launch" plan to roll out agreed-upon changes, communications strategy	By Dec. 15	Community Provider TBD	Focus Strategies	Shelter providers, shelter funders	Completed "Launch" timeline and draft communications materials
Work Area 3: Coordinate and Standardize Outreach					
A. Convene outreach work group	Sept. 2019	County Health Services	Focus Strategies	Outreach team representatives and funders	
Meeting 1: Level setting; overview of best practices in coordinated outreach; mapping what outreach currently exists in SCZ (hours, team composition, geography, targeting, services offered, data collected); identify gaps and duplication	By Sept. 15	County Health Services	Focus Strategies	Outreach team representatives and funders	Written inventory of existing outreach
Meeting 2: System design work/standardizing - what should all outreach be able to do (e.g. diversion, CE, connect to other resources, common messaging about what system has available); what should be specialized?	By Oct. 15	County Health Services	Focus Strategies	Outreach team representatives and funders	Written summary of agreements about desired common elements of all outreach
Meeting 3: Improving operations/coordination - what should be process/protocol for deploying outreach to right team gets to right person? Should all outreach teams collect common data elements; can data go into HMIS? Is there a common baseline of training all outreach should have?	By Nov. 15	County Health Services	Focus Strategies	Outreach team representatives and funders	Write proposal for new operational procedures and protocols for improved outreach coordination, common training standards, data collection plan
Meeting 4: Recommendations - agreed upon initial steps and timeline to begin shifting towards more coordinated outreach	By Dec. 15	County Health Services	Focus Strategies	Outreach team representatives and funders	Complete implementation timeline for agreed upon changes

Activities	Timeline	Assigned Entities/People/Roles - 3 columns			Deliverable or Result
		Lead/Convener	Staff/TA	Participant(s)	
B. Conduct interviews with unsheltered people; what outreach teams have engaged them; what is helpful; what would they like to see differently. client input group to gather input on shelter experience, what would help them secure housing faster	By Oct. 15	County Health Services	TBD	Outreach team representatives and funders	Summary of client input, implications for design of more coordinated outreach strategy
Work Area 4: Governance, Funding, Planning and Implementation Structure and Processes					
A. Re-Convene Governance Study Group	Sept. 2019	CAO	Focus Strategies	TBD but similar to previous group	
Meeting 1: Level setting; revisit previous work; get all participants on same page about where work is starting from, establish goals for this work group	By Sept. 15	CAO	Focus Strategies	TBD but similar to previous group	Written summary of work accomplished to date; written list of goals for re-booted group
Meeting 2: Policy setting, strategic direction, priorities. Develop decision-making process for proposed IPC, including how it integrates performance data, perspective from people with lived experience; whether/how decisions are binding on different entities (HAP, County, cities)	By Oct. 10	CAO	Focus Strategies	TBD but similar to previous group	Written decision-making process and policies
Meeting 3: Funding Alignment and Funder Coordination. Identify resources (funding streams) that will be coordinated, establish or identify funder coordination body, process for ensuring funding decisions are targeted and strategic, fair, transparent; consider how new funding streams will be integrated	By Oct. 30	CAO	Focus Strategies	TBD but similar to previous group	Written description of funder coordination structure, process, policies
Meeting 4: CoC Compliance. Map new propose structure to CoC governance requirements, identify areas that need refining to ensure compliance.	By Nov. 15	CAO	Focus Strategies	TBD but similar to previous group	Revised/refined Governance structure chart and description (membership of entities, roles of entities) to align with CoC requirements.

Activities	Timeline	Assigned Entities/People/Roles - 3 columns			Deliverable or Result
		Lead/Convener	Staff/TA	Participant(s)	
Meeting 5: Communication and Transparency. Agreements about how decisions will be captured and disseminated in a timely way, and evaluated and adjusted over time. Create a plan for a regular investment report to the community.	By Nov. 30	CAO	Focus Strategies	TBD but similar to previous group	Written description of communication policies and procedures
B. Draft New Governance Charter, Bylaws, Org Chart, other documents as needed; for approval by appropriate bodies (HAP, BOS, cities, etc.)	By Dec. 15	CAO	Focus Strategies	N/A	Governance Charter, bylaws, org chart and/or other associated documents
Work Area 5: Overall Homeless System Design					
A. Presentations on Baseline Report; begin identifying shape of new system through facilitated discussions with stakeholders (presentations to include HAP, others)	August-October	CAO & HAP	Focus Strategies	TBD	Begin drafting written system design, flow chart, key strategies, gaps to be filled
B. Complete system and project performance analysis (SWAP)	November	Focus Strategies	Focus Strategies		System performance reports
C. Present SWAP results (system performance), use results to inform continued development of system design	November	CAO & HAP	Focus Strategies	TBD	System performance reports presentation materials
D. Present SWAP results to individual providers (project performance), opportunity to engage each provider in system design decisions	November	Individual providers	Focus Strategies	Individual providers	Project performance reports (for individual providers)
E. Complete draft of system design (flow chart), description of new system, identify key strategies to be implemented, gaps to be filled, develop proposed staffing structure	December	CAO and HAP	Focus Strategies	TBD	Written system design, flow chart, key strategies, gaps to be filled
Predictive modeling and action planning	Jan - March 2020				

Short Term Action Plan

Role	Definition
Lead/Convenor	Takes ownership and accountability for work area, convenes work group or other planning body, makes decisions and/or empowers groups to make decisions, covers logistics such as meeting locations
Staff/Technical Assistance	Produces work to support implementations steps, including (but not limited to): research, analysis, draft documents, create agendas, facilitate meetings, build consensus and support individuals/groups to make decisions, checks in with Convenor between meetings
Participant(s)	Participate in implementation work group or other implementation entity, attends meetings regularly, complete small tasks in between meetings (e.g. review materials, prepare for discussions)

COMMUNITY ADVISORY
COMMITTEE ON HOMELESSNESS
(CACH)
AGENDA REPORT

Sept. 17, 2019

DEPARTMENT: CACH Phase 1 Sub-Committee via the City Manager's Office

SUBJECT: CACH Phase 1 Sub-Committee Recommendations for CACH Phase 1
Work Plan

RECOMMENDATION: The CACH Phase 1 Sub-Committee recommends adopting the
following policy areas to be included in the CACH's Phase 1 work plan:

1. Secure hygiene resources: restrooms and showers.
2. Increase local shelter options, especially identify a new site for the managed River Street
   Camp, but may also consider effective program modeling for emergency shelter.
3. Identify sites (or acceptable siting criteria) for new outdoor emergency shelter solutions
   such as transitional encampments or safe sleeping.
4. Modify the camping ordinance.

BACKGROUND: At its September 3rd meeting, the CACH formed the Phase 1 Sub-Committee
(Subcommittee) "to develop immediate policy recommendations to be shared with the full
CACH for the purpose of defining the Phase 1 work plan, including a high level feasibility
analysis." The goal of the CACH's Phase 1 Work plan is envisioned to offer specific and
actionable policy recommendations to the City Council by the beginning of January 2020 (if not
sooner), while also considering additional policy areas which may take more time to develop into
actionable recommendations. A Phase 2 work plan is also envisioned to provide final policy
recommendations to the City Council by April 2020, however the Subcommittee is not charged
with offering recommendations for Phase 2 policy areas at this time. Note that there has not been
a consensus around the definition of Phase 1 or Phase 2, or the definition of immediate policy
recommendations. Some members of the Subcommittee interpreted "immediate policy
recommendations" to mean recommendations that could occur as soon as the next CACH
meeting, or by the end of October at the latest.

DISCUSSION: The Subcommittee began working with staff to develop a survey to disseminate
to the greater community geared towards identifying the public's perceptions of homelessness-
related policy priorities, and to discover gaps in policies under consideration. We expect to have
this community survey disseminated after the September 17th CACH meeting, with results
available by our meeting on October 1st.

The Subcommittee also reviewed responses from an internal CACH member poll designed by
staff which asked for each member's top three to five policy area recommendations for
consideration during Phase 1, consisting of policies that had been developed by three previous
City Councils/task forces/committees between 2000 and 2019. There was not full CACH

participation in this poll: at the writing of this report, approximately half of the CACH members had provided input on policy priorities to the subcommittee. The member poll was implemented quickly to foster discussion and provide ample time for responses, however it was designed without a full discussion surrounding the definition of priorities of the CACH.

The Subcommittee acknowledges that individual responses to the internal member poll may have had different perspectives and values in defining what "priorities" meant to them, and that for the purposes of this recommendation, what "priorities" means has not been defined.

The Phase 1 policy areas which were most supported by members of the CACH who responded were:

1. Secure hygiene resources: restrooms and showers
2. Increase local shelter options, especially identify a new site for the managed River Street Camp, but may also consider effective program modeling for emergency shelter
3. Identify sites for new outdoor emergency shelter solutions such as a transitional encampments or safe sleeping
4. Secure storage facilities
5. Modify the camping ordinance

In addition to the well supported policy areas listed above, there was also support expressed by CACH members to consider including: increased outreach services for mobile behavioral health and mental health responses; improving City internal coordination system and protocols; designing and implementing a small scale safe sleeping program; engaging in strategic planning with Homeless Services Center, County and other service partners; establishing ordinance language for transitional encampments; creating safe sleeping zones, and addressing police harassment.

The Subcommittee attempted to come to agreement on policy areas to be further explored by the CACH in Phase 1 after reviewing the results of the internal poll. There was not consensus on the definition of Phase 1, which confused the expected deliverables of the Subcommittee. While policy areas were identified that were supported by respondents to the poll and a majority of members of the Subcommittee, there was not a consensus on the timing of consideration of immediate policy recommendations that would be made by the Subcommittee, and there was limited discussion of feasibility of the Phase 1 work plan with Subcommittee members or with staff. Recommendations were made that attempted to balance urgency of the policy area with feasibility of achieving specific actionable policy recommendations within the scope of the CACH's work plan. Both technical and political aspects of feasibility were considered, and it is expected staff will provide additional guidance on feasibility.

Apart from the considerations of the Phase 1 work plan, four areas of discussion were raised by the Subcommittee regarding high level functionality of the CACH that, if resolved, could improve communications and expectations around committee work:

1. What is the purpose of the CACH?
    a. Policy only or policy with operational details when possible.
2. What criteria are used to prioritize policy? Different criteria options include:
    a. Health and safety impacts
    b. Immediate feasibility to implement (lower hanging fruit)
    c. Existing policy (2000 and 2017 recommendations)

      d. Urgency or emergent needs
      e. Whether it needs to be done now, so there is more information for decisions later
3. What is the roll of a subcommittee and what are the expectations of the members?
      a. How many members of the subcommittee are necessary for each meeting?
      b. How many meetings might there be and how much homework?
      c. Does everyone need to agree or can different suggestions get included in the subcommittee's report?
4. What is the role of staff?
      a. Guiding vs supporting

Lastly, in addition to the policy areas being recommended in this document, the Subcommittee considered different approaches to timelines and specific recommendations that could be made in the CACH's work plan. Two alternative work plan timeline models and a list of possible complementary actions are being presented in an addendum document for further discussion. The decision to include an addendum to this report for further discussion was not unanimous.

POLICY BACKGROUND:

1. Secure hygiene resources: restrooms and showers

This policy category was previously recommended in the 2017 Homelessness Coordinating Committee's 20-Point Plan. The following discussion comes from that report. In addition, the City Council deferred the specific issue of Louden Nelson bathroom access policy to the CACH in August, 2019.

> Basic human needs and public health requires the availability of restrooms and showers. While showers are available at the Homeless Service Center and at a few other locations on a limited basis, there is inadequate supply to meet the need. As a result, many homeless individuals use public restrooms to bathe, which adds considerably to maintenance and cleaning and can dissuade other community members from using those facilities. Currently, our public restrooms are in constant use by the homeless community which can wholly exclude the restrooms from other users. At times, the restrooms will be occupied for long durations (hours, if unenforced) or full of bicycles and carts with persons bathing and laundering clothing, preventing others from accessing the facility. This type of use also prevents staff from cleaning the facilities and requires a large investment of staff time trying to vacate the spaces so that cleaning can occur and others can access the restrooms.

> Public restrooms also are in inadequate supply and the City expends tremendous effort and resources to clean human waste across the City. The City launched a pilot temporary toilet program in 2015, which should be evaluated and recommendations formed for consideration of a permanent sidewalk toilet facility.

> In addition, other communities deploy hygiene buses or mobile restroom trailers. These buses, with built-in shower and laundry facilities, travel to different locations on a schedule and then park for several hours while clients use the services. This mobile service avoids the cost of permanent infrastructure, enables broader service delivery and provides essential public health services. Also, this service should be coupled with case management or outreach services and integrate with the Coordinated Entry system.

ACTION: Explore locations and providers of additional restrooms and showers dedicated for the homeless community. Consider hygiene buses or mobile restroom trailers. Consider partnership with the faith-based community, homeless advocates, businesses and other organizations to support and host the mobile facilities.

ACTION: Evaluate City's pilot restroom program and return recommendations to the City Council.

2. Increasing local shelter options, especially identify a new site for the managed River Street Camp, but may also consider effective program modeling for emergency shelter

This policy category has emerged in recent years. There are currently two shelter programs scheduled to operate in three facilities in the winter of 2019/2020: the Winter Shelter program, and the 1220 River Street Camp (RSC) emergency shelter. In January 2019, the city's Winter Shelter program included space at the VFW building on 7th Avenue as well as the Salvation Army building on Laurel Street. The Winter Shelter program at the VFW currently runs from mid-November through mid-April only. The Laurel Street emergency shelter (expanded Winter Shelter) program has remained open year round in 2019 but a long term funding model for this program has not been established, and the facility is generally at capacity. Winter Shelter is currently funded via the Homeless Action Partnership (HAP) with local jurisdictional dollars and a one-time state grant program, the Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP). RSC is a tent camp-style shelter program which in its most recent connotation has been operated by the Salvation Army since May 2019, and is projected to close in March 2020 to accommodate a water infrastructure project. RSC is currently funded similarly to Winter Shelter. There is an urgent need to identify a replacement site to accommodate the residents of this program. Failure to identify a replacement program/site to accommodate the residents of RSC will result in these people being turned out onto the streets if the water infrastructure project proceeds as scheduled.

The CACH may elect to weigh in on effective program modeling for emergency shelter in our community. Winter Shelter operations have evolved over a number of years based on feedback from communities surrounding the facilities where the operations have taken place. An evaluation and recommendation of program modeling, taking into account best practices, community needs, and shelter resident needs could be undertaken in order to improve neighborhood relations, increase accessibility of the program, and ultimately improve outcomes.

3. Identifying a site for a new outdoor emergency shelter solution such as a transitional encampment or safe sleep site

This policy category has emerged in recent years. In February 2019 the City Council began working on an attempt to increase emergency shelter capacity in the City by establishing policy and programming around the concepts of transitional encampments, safe parking programs, and safe sleeping programs. A draft transitional encampment project charter focused on reaching community consensus on the program models for siting such programs in the community. Design of a small scale safe sleeping and storage program began in March 2019, but due to the rush to find a solution to the health and safety issues posed by an unsanctioned encampment near Highway 1/River Street, policies were pushed upon the community without sufficient (if any) outreach or engagement. Design of the program was halted due to a lack of support by the community, specifically neighborhoods where this program was discussed being implemented. The project charter work for transitional encampments was subsequently delegated to the CACH.

Due to lack of available existing building space for indoor shelter programs, the City has identified outdoor emergency shelter solutions as a viable temporary alternative. The CACH may elect to consider program modeling and siting, as well as ordinance language, taking into account best practices, community needs, and shelter resident needs in order to design effective programs that minimize impacts on the community and maximize program outcomes.

4. Secure Storage Facilities

This policy category was previously recommended in the 2017 Homelessness Coordinating Committee's 20-Point Plan. The following discussion comes from that report:

> Many homeless individuals have no safe location to store their possessions. As a result, many carry their possessions—often large and bulky and on a wheeled cart—with them everywhere, which hinders their ability to obtain services, maintain employment and generally participate in the community. In addition, the greater community is impacted with large collections of possessions on sidewalks and public spaces, including the public libraries. The Homeless Services Center previously provided lockers for use but the lockers have since been converted to a different use. There are few to none publicly available resources of this type.
>
> In some communities, this function is achieved with a storage facility (such as a warehouse or shipping container) manned with personnel to bag, check and keep possessions safe for the day. The Winter Shelter Program operated in this manner. Upon signing up for shelter at the intake site, program clients would check their large possessions into a storage container, which would be locked each night. In the morning, clients were returned to the intake site and reunited with their possessions. Other models include unmanned banks of lockers with keys that allow access any time day or night. Another model is the SHWASHLOCK Program, offered by Ocean Park Community Center (OPCC) in Santa Monica that provides showers, lockers and washers (SHowersWASHersLOCKers) to enable homeless individuals to keep possessions safe and maintain personal hygiene.
>
> Any model pursued should integrate with the Coordinated Entry system, in addition to providing case management, or at a minimum, outreach or referral.
>
> ACTION: Consider various models of this service. Identify and secure facilities to allow individuals to check their possessions into a managed storage facility, or rental storage lockers. This service should be co-located with other homeless services including case management or referral resources, or follow the storage, shower and laundry facility SHWASHLOCK model.

5. Modifying the camping ordinance

This policy area emerged in the fall of 2018. A federal circuit court ruling in September 2018, known as Martin v. Boise, requires local governments to cease enforcement of camping ordinances against homeless individuals with no access to alternative shelter. " The panel held that, as long as there is no option of sleeping indoors, the government cannot criminalize indigent, homeless people for sleeping outdoors, on public property, on the false premise they had a choice in the matter. " However, the panel's "holding does not cover individuals who do

have access to adequate temporary shelter, whether because they have the means to pay for it or because it is realistically available to them for free, but who choose not to use it. Nor [does the court] suggest that a jurisdiction with insufficient shelter can never criminalize the act of sleeping outside. Even where shelter is unavailable, an ordinance prohibiting sitting, lying, or sleeping outside at particular times or in particular locations might well be constitutionally permissible. … So, too, might an ordinance barring the obstruction of public rights of way or the erection of certain structures. "

The complex requirements of Martin v. Boise make it challenging for municipalities to both comply with the law and to effectively manage health and safety risks resulting from unsanctioned camping on public property. The City of Santa Cruz has suspended enforcement of the camping ordinance, and has developed a standard operating procedure for abating encampments that are deemed to be threats to public health and safety, however it is expected that the City will continue to be required to take extraordinary measures in order to respond to emerging health and safety threats failing the development of a comprehensive policy to replace the tool of the camping ordinance. In order to resume enforcement of a camping ordinance while remaining compliant with Martin v. Boise, the City would be required to either establish policies regarding the time, place, and manner where sleeping outside on public property would be permitted, or to ensure that adequate temporary shelter space would be made available to anyone who had no other alternatives to sleeping outside.

The CACH may consider providing recommendations for ordinance language establishing the time, place, and manner where sleeping in public is permitted (aka safe sleep zones), or codifying shelter availability conditions under which a revised camping ordinance could be enforced.

FEASIBILITY DISCUSSION:

For Phase 1 of the CACH work plan, the Subcommittee was looking to identify policies which addressed urgent public health and safety priorities, and could be developed into a specific, actionable, policy recommendation by January 2020, or would require more time for development than would be available in either Phase 1 or Phase 2 alone. Due to the complexity of evaluating feasibility, this discussion is limited to the understanding of the Subcommittee members. The expectation is that staff will provide additional feasibility analysis in the near future with respect to fiscal, resource, staffing and partnership requirements.

Restroom and shower policies address an urgent public health need. A range of policy recommendations with a range of costs, public engagement, and political feasibility can be considered. Specific actionable policy recommendations are believed to be achievable for this policy category by January 2020 if not sooner.

Identifying a new site for the River Street Camp and considering effective program modeling for emergency shelter address urgent public health and safety needs. While not without its faults, the existing River Street Camp is a proven concept that can be improved upon. Identifying a site for a replacement program may face significant political challenges, however program modeling improvements and community engagement are expected to mitigate the political challenges. There are one-time grant funds which remain available for the continued operation of a temporary emergency shelter, however long-term funding sources need to be identified. Specific actionable policy recommendations are believed to be achievable for this policy category by January 2020.

Identifying a site for a new outdoor emergency shelter solution such as a transitional encampment or safe sleep site is related to, if not the same policy category as identifying a new site for the existing River Street Camp. While the River Street Camp policies refer to replacement of a specific existing program, this policy category could be generalized to include programs which have not yet been designed or implemented. With respect to replacing River Street Camp, specific actionable policy recommendations are believed to be achievable by January 2020. Program modeling for alternative emergency shelter programs such as transitional encampments, safe parking programs, or safe sleep sites may be achievable by January 2020 depending on the scope of the work. Funding sources for new programs may not be identified until Phase 2, and siting for new programs may depend on establishing funding sources and overcoming political challenges via community engagement.

Secure storage facilities do not address an urgent public health and safety need, but do potentially help lower barriers to other services which do address those needs. While program modeling could be achieved by January 2020, identifying new sites which could be integrated with existing services, and identifying funding sources would be significant barriers to achieve by January 2020. There is currently a service provider that operates in this space who the City has worked with in the past, however the viability of a continued partnership is questionable.

Modifying the camping ordinance has the potential to address a critical shortcoming of existing City policy that has resulted in sporadic public health and safety crises. This policy area faces many of the same challenges as, and is related to, the siting and program modeling for outdoor emergency shelters policy area. There are significant political barriers to achieving actionable policy recommendations, but by beginning community engagement work on this issue in Phase 1, it is anticipated that such specific, actionable recommendations could be achievable by the end of Phase 2.

Submitted by:

Candice Elliott, CACH Co-Chair
Taj Leahy, CACH Co-Chair
Rafael Sonnenfeld, CACH Member
Serg Kagno, CACH Member
Stina Roach, CACH Member

ATTACHMENTS: CACH Polling Results

Data	Solutions	Concerns	Problem Statements
1. perception is a big deal	1. Solution needs to address needs of house and unhoused	1. Rains have started/are coming	1. How do we determine the highest priority/actionable solutions?
2. Housed people talk about the homeless as causing the health and safety issues, while homeless people are living with health and safety issues	2. Establishing values: dignity, wellbeing (mental/physical), respect	2. Siting is biggest issue – how much stakeholder buy in is "enough" (informed consent)	2. How do we define "feasibility?"
3. Need to set realistic timeframes for achieving community/stakeholder buy in	3. Engage broad number of stakeholders	3. Not all voices will get heard	3. How do we engage and create community buy in?
4. National Alliance to End Homelessness = good resources	4. understand different levels of roles and responsibilities	4. other voices/messages will dominate	4. How do we determine cost/budget of solutions?
5. S/one for NAEH will come to SC to inform	5. Understand continuum of care in city and County	5. How are we going to make decision in the CACH	5. What is the purpose of the CACH (policy or implementation)
6. Criteria things naturally move farther than others	6. Identify gaps in service	6. Not enough time in meetings	6. How do we determine criteria?
7. Focus Strategies can help	7. Look at evidence based best practices	7. Scope-Creep	7. What is the role of subcommittees?
8. 1 thing will help establish process	8. Create sub-committees to move the process along	8. Don't have experience "pushing policy"	8. What is the role of staff?
9. These are long-term problems that are getting short term solutions	9. Break work into "chunks" (sub committee)	9. Are we taking heat off City Council?	9. How do we find Evidence Based Best Practices
10. RSC will be closed for infrastructure development	10. Pick one thing (policy) to recommend and make it happen, Develop understanding, lay foundation for future work, do one thing really well	10. We need to get more educated	10. How can we simplify decision making process within CACH
11. RSC was funded by HAP. For SA but site is only available until mid-march	11. Hybrid of 1-focus path (above) = divide CACH into 2-4 subcommittees and move forward with whoever is ready can present	11. RSC is going to close	11. How distributed do we want to be?
12. Needle questions arise but the issue is multi faceted	12. Each committee follows some protocols	12. Locking at 1 thematic issue is too simplistic	12. Where will people without homes sleep in Dec.
13. If we don't do all 5 things	13. Specific in depth 2-way community discussion to create by-in, understanding	13. We aren't getting anything done	13. How do we incentivize people to use the shelter beds/services available
14. 800 Homeless	14. Committees can meet	14. Days when shelters are	14. How do we direct people

	more often	full, where do we tell people to go?	to safe sleep
15. 450 have shelter	15. Find long-term funding for long-term problem	15. Process is over complicated	15. How much community buy in does the council need
16. 4 sites on the table- but insufficient community buy-in	16. Pick one of the thematic areas to tackle with a few sub topics	16. Tendency to "perfect enemy" gets in the way of actual acting	16. How do we better understand stakeholder needs?
17. More can be accomplished with subcommittee	17. Get info from CACH members. Subcommittees could focus on: what funds are available, what are potential sites/best practices (temp or permanent)	17. Don't want to waist time on new safe sleep ordinance when it already been worked on	17. How do we establish committee process
18. We have different expectation of what a subcommittee is	18. Partner with people doing the work	18. Half baked proposal will blow up in our face	
19. Taj has fixed that superstructure	19. Start the First Thing, then leverage into next	19. We need criteria for each subcommittee to abide by	
20. We need staff involved for experience/knowledge	20. Housing, weather protection	20. We might over think committee criteria	
21. Community doesn't necessarily understand nuances of different styles of	21. Storage Facility		
22. All solutions revolve around siting	22. Access to bathrooms		
23. All solutions revolve around management	23. We need co-chairs to make assignments and get busy		
24. All solutions revolve around funding	24. Determine site locations		
25. It's okay to ask city for things	25. Navigation center with services		
26. Low hanging fruit is what can get done in 1 month	26. Police having "a place" to tell people to go (legal place to be)		
27. Some things don't need committees	27. Hygine services/facilities		
28. community engagement and siting are each committee	28. Focus on "ordinance, procedural" shift		
	29. Look at shelter program modeling		
	30. Need community buy-in committee focused on community engagement, funding, siting, etc.		
	31. Push through siting itself by: superstructure for tents		
	32. Let's start volunteering for committees/issues		
	33. Focus on informed		

	consent		
	34. CACH members should move toward issues they are drawn to		
	35. Focus on heath aspect as high priority, it's not political, affects everyone, easier consensus		
	36. Finding places for safe sleeping		
	37. Design need to include all needs (housed, unhoused)		
	38. Educate community about the "reality" of risks		
	39. Ask City attorney for draft of "safe sleeping" ordinance		
	40. Invite City Attorney to give presentation to CACH regarding camping ordinance		
	41. Change church safe sleep places from 3 to 5 spaces		
	42. Add "best practices" to Fred's list		
	43. Get some success under our belts, pilot		
	44. Things that don't require committee work can be done now		
	45. Proposed structure of sub committees: Metta: 1) Community engagement 2) Overall Funding Options Project Specific: 1) Siting 2) Secure Hygiene Resources		
	46. Each project subcommittee comes back with info re: siting, funding, management ("best practices"), public engagement, Fred's criteria		

8:15 DF over, CACH discusses topics to tackle first with framework established above (#46 Solutions)

CACH decided to establish the following subcommittees. These subcommittees will research Funding options, Siting options, Public Engagement, Program Management (best practices), Fred's criteria

Each subcommittee will report to the whole body at each CACH meeting.

Rules and Regulations of Subcommittee:

- Committees will used Fred's rubric as the guide
- Subcommittees will meet even if not all members can meet (just to move things along)
- Staff will present best practices for subcommittee work

Public Health (hygiene, needles, laundry, storage) Secure Hygiene Resources	ID Sites or Criteria for RSC, emergency shelter, & safe sleeping (and modify camping ordinance)	Metta: Community Engagement
Aran	Frank	Ami
Serg	Stina (2nd choice)	Candice
Stina	Don	Ingrid
Dwain	Rafa	Taj
Rafa (2nd choice)	Serg (2nd choice)	Brooke
Katie	Brooke (2nd choice)	Rafa (3rd Choice)

Motion: Rafa, 2nded, approved by consensus

COMMUNITY ADVISORY
COMMITTEE ON HOMELESSNESS
(CACH)
AGENDA REPORT

Oct. 1, 2019

DEPARTMENT: City Manager's Office

SUBJECT: Fiscal Report on Homelessness Expenses and Revenue Sources

RECOMMENDATION: The CACH receive a staff presentation on the City's fiscal landscape, both expenditures and revenues, related to homelessness.

BACKGROUND: As the CACH moves forward with recommendations to the City Council, it is important to understand the City's fiscal landscape in regards to homelessness. Included herein is an overview of the current (and projected) expenses as well as potential revenue sources.

EXPENSES: The homelessness-related expenses incurred by the City of Santa Cruz can be categorized into the following areas: departmental operating expenses, direct services, and community program support. Departmental expenses encompass the range of efforts put forth by Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Santa Cruz Police Department and the City Manager's Office to manage homelessness issues within the City, such as campsite clean-up, vandalism repair, education and outreach. The City currently offers direct services such as financial support for the winter shelter program and oversite of the River Street Camp. And finally, the City helps fund many community based program that support those currently experiencing homelessness.

Below is a table that outlines these average annual expenses:

Department or Program	Description of Services	Average Annual Expenditure
City Department Operational Expenses (not inclusive of all Depts within the City)		
Public Works: Resource Recovery	Campsite clean up	$300,000*
Public Works: Operations Division	Infrastructure repair, syringe clean-up	$140,000*
Parks and Recreation	Open space management	$320,000*
Park Rangers	Municipal code enforcement and resource management	$460,000*
SCPD	Estimated 60% of PD calls for service are homeless-related issues	$14.8 million*
CMO	Gateway camp safety and hygiene	$300,000
*based on 2017 expenses		
Total In Kind Expenses		$16,320,000
Direct Services		
River Street Camp	Infrastructure and shuttle services	$220,000

	(does not include operation/staff)	
Winter Shelter	City's portion of support	$171,448
Community Program Support		
Encompass Community Services	Housing pathways	$50,000
Families in Transition of SC County	Family Housing Stabilization	$15,000
Homeless Garden Project	Transitional Employment and Job Training	$17,000
Housing Matters (formerly Homeless Services Center)	180/2020	$115,000
Housing Matters (formerly Homeless Services Center)	Hygiene Program	$30,000
Bob Lee PACT/HOPES Program	Outreach services	$198,000
Countywide 2-1-1	Information and Referral System	$6,500
County DOW Program		$75,000
County MOST Program		$120,000
HAP Consultant Fees	City's portion of fees	$14,000
Homeless Management Information System/Coordinated Entry	City's portion of fees	$16,500
Homeward Bound	Transportation	$25,000
Homeless Coordinating Committee		$150,000
Downtown Streets Team	Work-Experience Program	$340,000
Community Action Board of SC County	Rental Assistance Program	$30,000
Total Direct Expenses		$1,202,000
	Average Annual Total Expenses	**$17,522,000**

REVENUE RESOURCES: The City funds most homelessness response and programming through several revenue sources. Most current in kind and direct service expenses are paid through the City's General and Enterprise Funds. The following additional funding sources are currently available to the City.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG): The CDBG an annual grant through Housing and Urban Development (HUD), is a program that provides communities with resources to address a wide range of community development needs. The grant averages about $500,000 annually with $300,000 of the funding allocated to community organization through a request for proposal process. The Santa Cruz City Council decides how these funds will be distributed each year.

FY 2019-2020: Roughly $100,000 of the grant is allocated to homelessness-related services.

Future FYs: The decision on how these funds are allocated is up to the Santa Cruz City Council and is therefore a potential source of revenue for additional homelessness-related programing.

Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP): This California state block grant provides local jurisdictions with funds to support the expansion or development for local capacity to address homelessness.

> *FY 2019-2020*: In 2019 this state funding source was called Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP). HEAP funds were allocated to the City totaling $1,564,677 ($1,400,000 for land purchase to locate an emergency/navigation center, $64,677 for River Street Camp infrastructure, and $100,000 for hygiene related expenses incurred by the City at the unsanctioned Gateway encampment).

> *FY 2020-2021:* Of the $650 million HHAP one-time block grant, approximately $6.5 million is expected to be allocated to the Santa Cruz County Continuum of Care. The allocation/distribution of these funds will be determined by the Santa Cruz County Homeless Action Partnership (HAP).

AB 411: This bill, which is currently awaiting passage at the state level, will avail an estimated $16 million in bond proceeds already secured by the City to be allocated to housing and homeless-related issues, specifically affordable housing and homeless facility development projects.

HUD Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA): In 2019 HUD made available approximately $2.3 billion in funding to provide resources to nonprofits, states and local governments to "quickly re-house homeless individuals, families, persons fleeing domestic violence, and youth while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused by homelessness; to promote access to and effective utilization of mainstream programs by homeless individuals and families; and to optimize self-sufficiency among those experiencing homelessness." Of the federal funds allocated, $3,300,000 were received by Santa Cruz County. The City of Santa Cruz has not applied for these funds in the past, but would be eligible to do so.

Grants and Alternative Funding Sources: Although the City does not currently seek out additional grant funding, there are existing sources that could be pursued from other governmental programs to the non-profit sector. Additional research is needed to determine what types of funding sources support municipal programs.

Submitted by:

Megan Bunch, Principal Management Analyst

CACH Recommendations Carried by City Council Motions

Dec. 10, 2019 City Council Meeting
Motion carried to direct staff to bring back to Council the following CACH recommendations for action:
- The City continue to help fund the 1220 River Street shelter program by supporting the County to write a new contract with the Salvation Army to continue services at a new location.   - The creation of additional managed low-barrier, ADA accessible emergency shelter program(s) to be opened this winter, either in the City limits or with a shuttle service from the City to the shelter if outside City limits., and include ongoing feedback with regular meetings between the management and the community,   - Expand CACH by one individual member, with CACH determining the nomination criteria, with the selection of the member determined by Council,   - To report back with proposed location, conducting necessary outreach on two additional ADA portable toilets with hand washing stations that are in a covered and well-lighted area, will be distributed throughout the downtown, and will be open 24/7.   - Direct the CACH to provide their input regarding the camping ordinance on or before the second Council meeting in February.   - Direct CACH to review the intended membership list, and work with City staff to review the existing applicant base and potentially also do targeted outreach to fill some of the open seats that were in the original intent for the committee.

Feb. 25, 2020 City Council Meetings
Motion carried to accept the second status report of the CACH with appreciation for the hard work of the group's members.
Motion carried to direct the City Manager to prepare an administrative budget adjustment, if necessary, in an amount not to exceed $12,500, to support Council-adopted policy including increased access to health and hygiene facilities inclusive of the following CACH mid-term policy recommendations: - That the City Council implement a pilot, three-month, staffed shower/laundry program with case management (not to exceed $10,000).   - That the City Council fund laundry/towel services through the Association of Faith Communities (AFC) to support the pilot staffed shower/laundry program (not to exceed $2,500).   - That the City Council monitor, and make public, the use rates, effectiveness and impacts of new hygiene services on immediate surroundings to inform long-term facility solutions.   - Provide clarity to City staff, minimize the negative consequences of discarding survival belongings and minimize the community impacts of unattended personal property.

Motion carried to direct the City Manager to draft new comprehensive "Personal Property Management" guidelines with analysis of best practices, resource considerations and implementation considerations to return for Council discussion and possible action no later than May 2020.
Motion carried to adopt the following CACH mid-term policy recommendation:
• That the City Council support shelter and safe sleeping models that include organization/staffing to supervise the site and take responsibility for addressing issues that arise but also include substantive management, operational, and governance roles for participants.
Motion **carried** to direct the City Attorney to return to Council no later than the second meeting in March with a first reading of an ordinance amending Chapter 6.36 - Camping to include:
1) Prohibition of overnight and daytime encampments in sensitive and at-risk areas of the City, with direction that prior to moving and/or citing people sleeping in restricted locations, information should be provided about legal indoor shelter locations such as the Armory, Salvation Army, or a facility within the County. At-risk areas should include, but are not limited to, those where: • Encampment is in a public right of way (road) and/or is blocking pedestrian traffic. • Encampment is blocking or impeding City staff (and/or agents of the City) access to City infrastructure. • Encampment is on private property without the owner's permission. • Encampment is in an area/configuration that constitutes a danger to occupants. • An imminent fire risk has been determined by the Fire Chief and a fire risk operational plan has been initiated by the Fire Department. • Encampment is within the boundaries of the Water Director's safe drinking water/watershed habitat map. • Encampment is within the boundaries of the Parks and Recreation Director's environmentally sensitive habitat map. • Encampment has already been closed due to Urgent Criteria or Scoring of High Priority with Assessment Tool.
2) Prohibition of high density unpermitted encampments within the City, based on number of occupants and/or square footage.
3) Increase to five (5) the number of overnight vehicles permitted in City-authorized safe-parking programs located on faith- based, commercial, and approved governmental lots, in accordance with conditions approved by Council. By City Council resolution, number of overnight safe-parking vehicles in approved governmental lots may exceed five.
Motion carried to direct the CACH to conduct up to three additional meetings to prepare their final report in order to sunset. The focus of the CACH during these final meetings should continue to be focused on policy considerations around safe sleeping siting and program models that can be embedded in the Santa Cruz County Focus Strategies Plan, are regionally focused, and leverage all available county and state funding

opportunities on the horizon. A Community Listening Forum should be included.
Motion carried to direct the members of the 2X2 City-County working group to agendize an item related to safe sleeping siting and program models at their next meeting, for a recommendation on the appropriate body to lead the siting, oversight, programmatic analysis, and public outreach.

Santa Cruz County HEAP and CESH Awards 2019

Santa Cruz County, its Cities, and its community continue to grapple with a very substantial homelessness challenge. They are not alone in confronting rising homelessness. Counties and Cities across California have reported increased homelessness numbers, and homelessness has become more visible in many locations. Statewide, homelessness has increased by 9% since 2010, while nationally it has decreased by 13% during the same period.[1]

In 2018, the State of California approved unprecedented funding in response to this growing crisis of homelessness in California. Among other funding sources, the State enacted the one-time $500 million Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) and the ongoing California Emergency Solutions and Housing (CESH) program. Both of these new programs were in the form of block grants awarded on the basis of formula to the local Continuum of Care (CoC). The Watsonville/Santa Cruz City & County CoC's share of HEAP funds was $9,674,883.45, while its share of the first round of CESH funds was $889,424.

Community Engagement Process

In preparing to make the best possible use of these funds, the County, Cities, and our local CoC Homeless Action Partnership (HAP), carried out a highly comprehensive, countywide, collaborative process in order to identify priorities and estimated budget amounts for HEAP and CESH eligible activities. This was a very extensive process that included representatives of homeless service providers, homeless youth programs, law enforcement, behavioral health, County and City officials, and adults and youth experiencing homelessness, among many other stakeholder groups. Key steps in the community engagement process were:

1. HAP Meeting: Briefings and Conversation on HEAP & CESH – 6/27/18, 8/15/18, 10/12/18, 10/17/18, & 12/19/18
2. Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP): Prioritizing for HEAP Youth Set Aside – 7/17/18, 8/14/18, 9/4/18, 9/25/18, 10/16/18, & 11/20/18
3. HAP Priorities Refresh Process – Survey (96 responses) & 9/21/18 Priorities Workshop (60+ attendees)
4. CESH Countywide Stakeholder Input Meeting- 10/9/18 (30 attendees)
5. HEAP Jurisdictional Stakeholder Input Meetings –11/27/17 County (35 attendees), 11/28/18 Watsonville (20 attendees), & 12/3/18 Santa Cruz (39 attendees)
6. Elected Officials Meetings – ongoing briefings by staff of County and City elected officials
7. Final Approval of CESH Recommendations: 10/12/18 HAP Governing Board/Executive Committee
8. Final Approval of HEAP Recommendations: 12/10/18 HAP Governing Board/Executive Committee.

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[1] 2019-20 California State Governor's Budget.

9. Final Approval of HEAP/CESH Request for Proposals document: 1/15/19 HAP Governing Board/Executive Committee.

Project Selection Process

Request for Proposals-

On 1/15/19 the HAP Governing Board and Executive Committee approved a project selection process that centered on a Request for Proposals (RFP) designed to surface the best possible proposals to meet the jurisdictional and community priorities identified through community engagement. Key steps in the project selection process included the following:

- Released the RFP on January 18, 2019 and broadly publicized it through a press release, list serve messages, web postings, and meeting presentations.
- Provides an Applicant Technical Assistance Session on January 25, 2019.
- Composed a diverse set of 25 reviewers representative of the major geographic areas in the county and with expertise across all priorities areas.
- Divided the group of RFP responses into five subpanels for project types as follows: Services, Prevention & Housing, Emergency Sheltering, Youth Set-Aside, and Capital Feasibility Review.
- Assigned the reviewers to subpanels and required that they sign a conflict of interest statement and recuse themselves where appropriate.
- Assigned the reviewers to do an initial review of projects using a rating tool according to RFP criteria.
- Convened the 5 subpanels during the week of March 4, 2019 to discuss the proposals and reach subpanel consensus on project and funding recommendations in their project areas.
- Convened a cross panel composed of subpanel members and HEAP/CESH planning team members on March 13, 2019 to ensure consistency and alignment across the subpanel recommendations, and develop a cohesive set of recommendations for consideration by the HAP Governing Board and Executive Committee.
- Convened the HAP Governing Board and Executive Committee as the decision body on March 15, 2019 in order to review subpanel and cross panel recommendations and to make final project selection and funding decisions.

Letters of Interest and Emergency Allocation-

In January, the HAP Governing Board and Executive Committee found that there was an urgency to address immediate shelter, health, and safety needs of unsheltered homelessness persons, but that it would take until at least April 2019 to complete the RFP award process. Therefore, the HAP Governing Board and Executive Committee reached consensus on an emergency allocation of HEAP funds totaling $1,005,000 for emergency shelter and public health and safety hygiene services through June 30, 2019, and $100,000 for a community

engagement process. The purpose of the emergency allocation for sheltering and hygiene was to protect life, health and safety and to immediately alleviate human suffering that should not be prolonged until the conclusion of the HEAP and CESH RFP process. Thus, the following key steps were taken:

- Released an expedited Request for Letters of Interest (LOI) in early February 2019 totaling $605,000 for emergency sheltering options for unsheltered homeless individuals.
- Convened a subpanel composed of HEAP/CESH planning team members and knowledgeable stakeholders February 13, 2019 to review the LOIs and develop initial project and funding recommendations.
- Convened the HAP Governing Board and Executive Committee as the decision body on February 22, 2019 in order to review LOIs and subpanel recommendations and to make final project selection and funding decisions.
- Released an LOI on March 6, 2019 totaling $100,000 for community engagement and public communications services (the deadline for applications is March 22, 2019).
- Allocated the remainder of the emergency allocation to immediate public health and safety hygiene and urgent sheltering needs.

Award Decisions

As a result of the robust community engagement and project selection process, we are very pleased to announce the following award decisions:

HEAP & CESH RFP Award Decisions

Applicant/Project	Activities Funded	HEAP Amount	CESH Amount	Total
City of Santa Cruz Land Purchase	Land Purchase for: Emergency Shelter, Hygiene, Day Services	$1,400,000	$0	$1,400,000
*Reservation of Funds for North County Navigation Center/Year Round Shelter Operations	Navigation Center Year-Round Emergency Shelter Day Services Hygiene Services	$1,030,294	$177,888	$1,208,182
Salvation Army South County Navigation Center	Shelter Case management Housing navigation Hygiene services Basic needs services Rental assistance	$822,112	$177,888	$1,000,000
Encompass CS YHDP Youth Resource Center	Youth/ young adult day center services Respite beds	$787,003	$0	$787,003

	Case management			
Abode Services Rapid Rehousing Program	Rapid rehousing Financial assistance Housing navigation	$382,383	$217,617	$600,000
Homeless Services Center Paul Lee Loft Shelter Operations	Shelter Case management Hygiene services	$555,000	$0	$555,000
Community Action Board Watsonville Works!	Case management Transitional work experience	$459,182	$0	$459,182
Community Action Board Rental Assistance Program	Prevention Case management Rental assistance	$381,985	$69,833	$451,818
Community Action Board YHRT	Youth and young adult: Case management Housing navigation Employment & education referrals Benefits referrals Emergency vouchers	$422,835	$0	$422,835
Association of Faith Communities Faith Community Shelter	Shelter Case management Hygiene services	$402,692	$0	$402,692
Monarch Services DV Emergency Shelter Capital Improvements	Capital improvements Domestic violence shelter Motel vouchers	$350,000	$0	$350,000
Santa Cruz County Housing Authority Landlord Incentives & Move In Costs	Financial assistance Landlord bonuses Unit repair fund	$251,700	$68,315	$320,015
Community Bridges Mountain Community Resources	Case management Hygiene services Basic needs services	$240,478	$0	$240,478
Association of Faith Communities SafeSpaces Parking	Parking Hygiene services Volunteer meals	$237,950	$0	$237,950
Cabrillo College Emergency Housing Services Program	Rental assistance	$137,724	$0	$137,724
MHCAN Shower	Showers	$110,994	$0	$110,994

Room				
Congregational Church, Soquel MCHC Shower the People	Portable showers Hygiene services	$61,270	$0	$61,270
Bill Wilson Center Shared Housing for Youth	Youth/young adults: Shared housing Case management Financial assistance Host incentives	$58,300	$0	$58,300
Santa Cruz County CoC Lead Planning	CoC planning/coordination	$0	$44,471	$44,471
Community Technology Alliance Santa Cruz County HMIS	HMIS services	$0	$44,471	$44,471
Santa Cruz County HSD Smart Path to Housing and Health	Coordinated entry services	$0	$44,471	$44,471
Wings Homeless Advocacy Vital Identification Records	Birth certificates and other ID services	$38,700	$0	$38,700

* The HAP Governing Board and Executive Committee decided to set aside funds for a North County Navigation Center, but would like further information and coordination before selecting a particular project. Thus, North County Navigation Center applicants will be invited to re-submit a proposal pursuant to specific guidance from the HAP and jurisdictional partners.

HEAP LOI and Emergency Allocation Award Decisions

Applicant/Project	Activities Funded	HEAP Amount	CESH Amount	Total
Emergency Sheltering LOI				
Association of Faith Communities SafeSpaces Parking	Parking Hygiene services Volunteer meals etc.	$45,000	$0	$45,000
Homeless Services Center Paul Lee Loft and Hygiene Bay	Shelter Case management Hygiene services	$120,000	$0	$120,000
Salvation Army Santa Cruz Emergency Shelter	Shelter Case management Hygiene services Basic needs services	$195,000	$0	$195,000
Salvation Army	Shelter	$110,000	$0	$110,000

Watsonville Emergency Shelter	Case management Hygiene services Basic needs services			
Emergency Allocations - immediate public health & safety hygiene and urgent sheltering needs				
City of Santa Cruz - River Street	$64,677	$0	$64,677
City of Santa Cruz Hygiene at Gateway Plaza	$100,000	$0	$100,000
Homeless Services Center Hygiene Bay	$18,000	$0	$18,000
Salvation Army - River Street Camp	$206,323	$0	$206,323

Please note that the HAP has released, but has not yet reached decisions on the $100,000 LOI for immediate community engagement and public communications services. Finally, per State HEAP and CESH regulations 5% of the total HEAP and CESH allocations have been retained for central local planning and administration of the HEAP and CESH programs.

Summary of RFP Applications and Awards

RFP Applicant Profile-

The response to the RFP was very robust with 35 proposals from 25 agencies requesting approximately $30 million in total. Here are some highlights:

- The amounts requested varied widely; the smallest request was for $12,000 and the largest $6,135,343.
- Most agencies submitted one or two proposals, but three agencies submitted three proposals each.
- Regarding HEAP only, approximately $13.2 million was requested for Services, $3.2 million for Rental Assistance, $9.8 million for Capital Improvements, and $4.85 million for the Youth Set-Aside.
- Regarding categories of proposals, 15 were for emergency interventions, eight were for housing-focused projects, nine were for non-emergency supportive services, and three were for systems investment projects (e.g., HMIS or CES).
- Altogether, the projects proposed serving almost 10,000 people and permanently housing more than 1,000.
- The projects were well-spread geographically with 13 proposing services countywide, 13 in the City of Santa Cruz, six in the City of Watsonville, one in the San Lorenzo Valley, one in Aptos, and one in Soquel.
- Regarding homeless populations, 14 projects proposed serving both individuals and families, 11 youth and young adults, 10 individuals only, and zero families only.

RFP Award Profile-

In total, 22 RFP projects within 18 agencies were conditional awarded funding. Here are some highlights:

- 63% of proposals were awarded funds, although many received less than they requested due to insufficient funding to cover all needs.
- Almost 75% of applicants had at least one proposal funded.
- The amounts awarded varied widely; the smallest award was for $38,700 and the largest $1,400,000.
- Regarding categories of awarded proposals, 10 were for emergency interventions, four were for housing-focused projects, two were for non-emergency supportive services, three were for youth projects, and three were for systems investment projects.
- The awarded projects were well-spread geographically with 10 to provide services countywide, five in the City of Santa Cruz, four in the City of Watsonville, one in the San Lorenzo Valley, one in Aptos, one in Soquel, and one in mid-county.
- Regarding homeless populations, 11 awarded projects are for individuals and families, seven are for individuals only, and four are for youth and young adults.

Next Steps – Applicant Notification Letters and County Contracts

The HEAP/CESH project team will shortly provide notification letters to each applicant. As noted in the RFP, the awards are conditional upon final negotiation of the scope of work and the applicant's ability and willingness to execute and conform to a County contract. Some of the awards are for less than the amount requested, so the applicant will need to revise the budget, scope of work, and performance outcomes accordingly. In a few cases, the HAP Governing Board and Executive Committee decided to fund particular activities within a proposal, but not other activities. A description of any conditions and the next steps toward completing a County contract will be provided in the letter.

Also, as a reminder awardees must meet the following requirements:

- Contribute client-level and program-level data to the Santa Cruz County HMIS.
- Participate in the Santa Cruz Smart Path Coordinated Entry System for the purpose of prioritizing and matching clients to appropriate housing and service programs.
- Adhere to the Housing First principles as defined in State program regulations.
- Must comply with all requirements of the State HEAP and/or CESH program.

Finally, the HEAP/CESH project team members look forward to continued collaboration with all stakeholders to make the HEAP and CESH programs a success.

❋❋❋

Thank you very much for your efforts and commitment to ending homelessness in Santa Cruz County. Question may be directed to Rayne Marr at rayne.marr@santacruzcounty.us or HAP Consultant Tony Gardner at tonygardnerconsulting@yahoo.com.

EXECUTIVE ORDER N-23-20

WHEREAS California faces a severe housing crisis that has made housing unaffordable for too many Californians and, in turn, exacerbated the problem of homelessness; and

WHEREAS homelessness in California is not confined to urban corridors but is present in urban, suburban, and tribal and rural communities throughout the state; and

WHEREAS data released recently by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development based on the 2019 Point-in-Time Count indicated that there were 151,278 individuals who were homeless in California, over 108,000 of whom were unsheltered, and that the homeless population has been steadily increasing; and

WHEREAS Californians driven into homelessness often develop significant health issues over time and, often experience significant morbidity and die sooner; and

WHEREAS it is estimated that a substantial proportion of individuals who are homeless experience chronic physical and mental health disorders, yet are not receiving regular and consistent medical or psychiatric care; and

WHEREAS California's homelessness crisis has put considerable stress on many public services including transportation, libraries, schools, health services and public safety, as well as created public health challenges; and

WHEREAS California's homelessness crisis has impacted certain business sectors throughout the state and is a top concern to many residents, businesses, communities, tribal governments, cities, and counties across the state; and

WHEREAS unauthorized encampments of people who are homeless are increasing in many areas of the state within the public right of way and near or on private or tribal property, resulting in traffic and fire hazards, crime, risk of injury and death, and other conditions detrimental to public health and safety, both for people who are homeless and people who are not; and

WHEREAS since 2018, almost 200 counties and cities have declared a shelter crisis, pursuant to Government Code section 8698 et seq.; and

WHEREAS over the past two years, the state has substantially increased its efforts to address street homelessness by providing more than $2.7 billion in new funding, significantly increasing its support for safety net services, eliminating barriers to getting navigation centers and temporary housing built to allow homeless adults to receive services and stability in

order to find longer-term housing, enacting the most aggressive rent-gouging protections, launching a 100-Day Challenge Initiative to bring counties and cities together to more urgently address homelessness in their communities, and expediting funding allocations to local governments, including allocations to counties to reduce the number of families in the child welfare services system experiencing homelessness; and

WHEREAS solutions to homelessness require additional innovation, cooperation and urgency within the public sector, and among the public and private and tribal sectors; and

WHEREAS because reducing the population of homeless individuals in California is a matter of critical statewide importance, the state can and needs to do more to help local communities act with urgency to address street homelessness and the society-wide problems associated with the homelessness crisis.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor of the State of California, by virtue of the power and authority vested in me by the Constitution and statutes of the State of California, do hereby issue this Order to reduce street homelessness, break down barriers to homeless individuals accessing health care and other critical services, and to increase housing options for those experiencing homelessness. This Order shall become effective immediately.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:

1. All state agencies specifically referenced in this Order shall develop by no later than February 28, 2020 accountability metrics for state agencies and for local partners to assess the use of the state resources referenced in the following paragraphs and their impact on reducing street homelessness, breaking down barriers to homeless individuals accessing health care and other critical services, and increasing housing options for those experiencing homelessness. The metrics shall be published online and regularly updated. In carrying out this Order, state agencies shall consider the extent to which local partners regularly and publicly report data based on the local metrics.

2. The Department of Finance, pursuant to its authority under Government Code sections 11005, 11005.1, and 13306, shall immediately establish the California Access to Housing and Services Fund within the Department of Social Services, to receive future state appropriations, as well as donations from philanthropy and the private sector, and to provide much needed dollars for additional affordable housing units, providing rental and operating subsidies, and stabilizing board and care homes;

3. To rapidly increase housing options for those experiencing homelessness, the following actions shall occur by no later than January 31, 2020:

a. The Department of General Services shall identify all properties from the digitized inventory of excess state land created by EO N-06-19 that can be used by local partners, including tribal governments, counties, cities, or non-profit agencies, on a short-term emergency basis to provide shelter for individuals who are homeless, so long as such usage will not delay affordable housing development on those properties.

b. The Department of General Services shall conduct an initial assessment of all state facilities to identify facilities that can be used by local partners on a short-term emergency basis to provide shelter for individuals who are homeless and in need of health and social services.

c. The Department of Transportation (Caltrans) shall develop and share a model lease template to allow counties and cities to use Caltrans property adjacent to highways or state roads in those jurisdictions on a short-term emergency basis to provide shelter for individuals who are homeless, building on recent partnerships with the cities of Los Angeles, San Jose, and San Francisco, and consistent with Streets & Highways Code section 104.30. Priority for future partnerships to make state land available to counties and cities for short-term emergency housing shall be given to jurisdictions where a shelter crisis declared pursuant to Government Code section 8698 et seq. is in effect.

d. The Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development shall work with local jurisdictions, tribal communities, and private entities to conduct an initial assessment of the appropriateness and availability of vacant and decommissioned hospitals and health care facilities for use by local partners on a short-term emergency basis to provide shelter for individuals who are homeless.

e. The Department of Food and Agriculture, in consultation with the Department of General Services, the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Department of Social Services, and the Office of Emergency Services, shall conduct an initial assessment of fairgrounds in or near jurisdictions where a shelter crisis is currently in effect, and, for those fairgrounds, determine the population capacity and space that would currently be available to local partners on a short-term emergency basis to provide shelter for individuals who are homeless.

4. The Department of General Services shall supply 100 travel trailers from the state fleet, and the Emergency Medical Services Authority shall supply complementary modular tent structures, to provide temporary emergency housing and the delivery of health and social services in communities across the state. The Department of General Services and the Emergency Medical Services Authority shall supply trailers and tents immediately and

end by September 30, 2020, unless the secretaries of the Government Operations Agency and the Health and Human Services Agency both concur on a case-by-case basis that the specific circumstances warrant the continued use of the trailers or tent structures. These trailers and tent structures shall only be used where the following criteria have been satisfied:
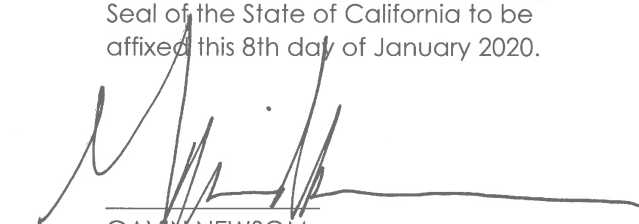
a. A shelter crisis declared pursuant to Government Code section 8698 et seq. or its equivalent under the applicable laws governing the jurisdiction of a federally recognized tribe in California is in effect.

b. Local partners, including counties, cities, and non-profit agencies, have the capacity and resources to deploy, operate, secure, and maintain the trailers or tent structures.

c. Local partners make appropriate health, social, housing, and other appropriate services available to support the needs of individuals temporarily housed in the trailers or tent structures and transition them into permanent, safe and stable housing.

d. Local partners agree to regularly and publicly report data based on the accountability metrics referenced in paragraph 1.

5. To further assist local jurisdictions in addressing street homelessness, there shall be a multi-agency state strike team comprised of the Business, Consumer Services, and Housing Agency; the Government Operations Agency; the Health and Human Services Agency; the Labor and Workforce Development Agency; and the Transportation Agency. The strike team shall be coordinated by the Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council and provide technical assistance and targeted direct support to counties, cities, and public transit agencies seeking to bring individuals experiencing homelessness indoors and connect them with appropriate health, human, and social services and benefits.

FURTHERMORE, all counties, cities, public transit agencies, special districts, school districts, tribal governments, and non-governmental actors, including businesses, faith-based organizations, and other non-profit agencies, are requested to examine their own ability to provide shelter and house homeless individuals on a short-term emergency basis and coordinate with local authorities to provide shelter and house individuals.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that as soon as hereafter possible, this Order shall be filed with the Office of the Secretary of State and that widespread publicity and notice shall be given to this Order.

This Order is not intended to, and does not, create any rights or benefits, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity, against the State of California, its departments, agencies, or other entities, its officers or employees, or any other person.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto
set my hand and caused the Great
Seal of the State of California to be
affixed this 8th day of January 2020.

GAVIN NEWSOM
Governor of California

ATTEST:

ALEX PADILLA
Secretary of State

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

EXECUTIVE ORDER N-06-19

WHEREAS California is experiencing an acute affordable housing crisis that stifles economic growth, contributes to the homelessness epidemic, consumes an ever-growing share of the paychecks of working families, and holds millions of households back from realizing the California Dream; and

WHEREAS nearly 50 percent of California's households cannot afford the cost of housing in their local market; and

WHEREAS for decades, California has failed to build enough homes for its growing population at all income levels, ranking 49th in the country in housing production per capita in 2016; and

WHEREAS restrictive zoning and land-use policies at the local level are a major cause of the shortfall between California's housing needs and the available supply of housing; and

WHEREAS when communities do not build their fair share of housing, the surrounding region must absorb new residents who, as a consequence of a lack of access to affordable housing, suffer from higher rents and longer commutes; and

WHEREAS the high cost of land also significantly limits the development of affordable housing in areas with the greatest demand for new housing; and

WHEREAS state agencies own thousands of parcels of land throughout the state, some of which exceed those agencies' foreseeable needs; and

WHEREAS excess state land is often located in or near urban areas where the need for new housing is acute; and

WHEREAS the lack of affordable housing across California is a matter of vital statewide importance; and

WHEREAS expanding housing opportunities and solving the affordable housing crisis will require a new level of innovation and cooperation between the public and private sectors; and

WHEREAS fostering housing innovation will catalyze new construction industries and spur job growth in the state; and

WHEREAS local zoning ordinances do not govern the use of state property, and the State possesses legal authority to enter into low-cost, long-term leasing agreements with housing developers and accelerate housing development on state-owned land as a public use.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor of the State of California, by virtue of the power and authority vested in me by the Constitution and statutes of the State of California, do hereby issue this order to become effective immediately:

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:

1. The Department of General Services shall create a digitized inventory of all state-owned parcels that are in excess of state agencies' foreseeable needs by, among other things, conducting a comprehensive survey of all state-owned land. This inventory shall be completed by no later than April 30, 2019. To meet this deadline, all agencies under my direct executive authority shall support this effort by responding to all inquiries made by the Department of General Services.

2. The Department of General Services, the Department of Housing and Community Development, and the Housing Finance Agency shall collaborate to develop two new screening tools for prioritizing affordable housing development on excess state land. The tools shall be designed to identify and evaluate parcels of excess state land:

   a. Where housing development is most likely to be economically feasible, accounting for, among other factors, a parcel's size, shape, grading, adjacencies, potential for consolidation, lack of site constraints, and proximity to job centers, education, high-frequency public transportation networks, utilities, and other services and amenities; and
   b. Where underproduction is impacting housing affordability, accounting for, among other factors, availability of affordable housing in the job and commute sheds, the gap between supply and demand, and the rate of increase in rent.

   Both tools shall be developed by no later than March 29, 2019.

3. The Department of General Services, in consultation with the Department of Housing and Community Development, shall apply the new screening tools to the State's inventory of excess state real property. The Department of General Services shall generate a comprehensive map of excess state real estate parcels where development of affordable housing (a) is feasible and (b) will help address regional underproduction. The map shall overlay a graphical representation (*i.e.*, a heat map) of where affordable housing development is most feasible and impactful. By April 30, 2019, the Department shall provide an interim progress report.

4. Where appropriate, state agencies shall consider exchanging excess state land with local governments for other parcels for purposes of affordable housing development and preservation. Parcels shall be exchanged with the goal of maximizing regional capacity to build and preserve affordable housing units.

5. The Department of General Services, in consultation with the Department of Housing and Community Development, shall issue Requests for Proposals on individual parcels and accept proposals from developers of affordable housing interested in entering into low-cost, long-term ground leases of parcels on the priority map.

a. Requests for Proposals shall address, among other considerations: the number of housing units to be built and preserved; maximization of land resources and level of affordability; feasibility of breaking ground within two years of entering the lease and completing units within three years; the individual cost per unit of construction; the use of renewable construction materials, such as cross-laminated timber; and the developer's demonstrated capacity to complete affordable housing projects.
b. Selection of projects shall catalyze and incubate innovative models for construction (such as modular or prefabrication), financing, and workforce development.
c. Bidding requirements shall include commitments to pay prevailing wages as required under the law.

6. The Department of General Services, in consultation with the Department of Housing and Community Development, shall begin to implement the above selection process no later than September 30, 2019.

7. The Department of General Services, the Department of Housing and Community Development, and other state agencies and departments shall use all existing legal and financial authority to expedite and prioritize these developments, including by giving them preference in the award of state funding, pursuant to my further direction. Agencies not under my direct executive authority are requested to do the same.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that as soon as hereafter possible, this Order shall be filed with the Office of the Secretary of State and that widespread publicity and notice shall be given to this Order.

This Order is not intended to, and does not, create any rights or benefits, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity, against the State of California, its departments, agencies, or other entities, its officers or employees, or any other person.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of California to be affixed this 15th day of January 2019.

GAVIN NEWSOM
Governor of California

ATTEST:

ALEX PADILLA
Secretary of State

PRESS RELEASE

Date: April 1, 2020
Contact: Jason Hoppin
831-454-3401

COVID-19 HOMELESSNESS TASK FORCE ESTABLISHED
Priority tasks include protecting health and supplementing services

The County of Santa Cruz and partner cities have established a task force to oversee homeless services during the COVID-19 pandemic, focused on minimizing the spread of the disease by isolating sick and vulnerable individuals and supplementing existing services impacted by the outbreak.

Led by the Santa Cruz County Department of Human Services, the task force consists of staff from the County and cities of Santa Cruz and Watsonville, as well as community-based organizations' experts brought in to help secure facilities to shelter both sick and well individuals experiencing homelessness, as well as a range of services needed to support the operation of those facilities.

"We now have more than a dozen staff working together to address this very important community need," said Elissa Benson, Assistant County Administrative Officer for Santa Cruz County. "Care for people experiencing homelessness is a vital element of our overall plan to limit the spread of COVID-19 in the Santa Cruz County community."

"The City of Santa Cruz stands in partnership with the County and regional homeless service agencies to provide for the best possible support for our unsheltered community," said Susie O'Hara, Assistant to the City Manager for the City of Santa Cruz and task force member. "We have been working double time to meet all of the objectives set forth by the County and offer new sites for programming as those needs are identified."

"In our collective efforts to slow down the spread of this dangerous disease, it is especially important that we provide services to the most vulnerable in our community," said Matt Huffaker Watsonville City Manager. "This collaborative effort will ensure that homeless individuals will be connected with safe shelter and services to ensure their health and the health of the community at large."

SERVING THE COMMUNITY – WORKING FOR THE FUTURE

The Human Services Departmental Operations Center is tasked with implementing and overseeing all facets of the local pandemic response within the homelessness community. It has already reached a lease agreement on a private hotel/motel facility, and is ready to scale up with additional lease agreements if and when the need arises. For medical reasons, the County is not pursuing hotel vouchers to house symptomatic patients in publicly available hotel facilities.

Hotel/motel capacity will be prioritized to house COVID-19-positive homeless patients who are recuperating, homeless individuals with significant COVID-19 exposure in need of quarantine, and medically vulnerable and elderly homeless individuals. These facilities are one pillar of the task force's four-pillar plan, which also includes expanded sheltering capacity, expanded hygiene infrastructure and direct outreach to homeless individuals.

The task force has requested 5,600 MREs (meals ready-to-eat) from the State for distribution to people experiencing homelessness. In addition, the City of Santa Cruz has completed steps to provide resources to people experiencing homelessness, including hiring a Homelessness Manager and coordinating temporary food distribution with Santa Cruz City Schools to provide 75 meals daily to local persons experiencing homelessness.

The County and partner cities, including Santa Cruz and Watsonville, are nearing completion of a plan to expand overall sheltering capacity to replace capacity diminished by the Santa Cruz County Health Officer's Shelter in Place order, which limits the number of beds available in existing shelters due to distancing requirements. An announcement on the locations and operations of those sites is expected within days.

The City of Santa Cruz has also worked with the Salvation Army and hired Downtown Streets Team members to bring on additional site monitors to facilitate ongoing safe and client-focused operations at the Armory. Resources at the Housing Matters campus on Coral Street are being reconfigured to accommodate more shelter capacity and resource centers for increased health assessments, and County outreach workers, including Homeless Persons Health Project Staff, have received training on symptoms and care of individuals with COVID-19.

In partnership with Santa Cruz City Schools (SCCS) and facilitated by the County, Santa Cruz City staff will begin distributing bagged meals to persons experiencing homelessness this week. Meals will be distributed across local homeless services and into encampments to ensure those who typically receive food in congregate settings are meeting social distancing protocols.

Rafa Sonnenfeld
CACH Member
Safe Sleeping Subcommittee Member
July 29, 2020

Final CACH Report Addendum

I am writing this letter for the purpose of highlighting some of the work and recommendations that I and the CACH Safe Sleep Subcommittee worked on that we unfortunately were not afforded an opportunity to present to the full body of the CACH for inclusion in the final report. When the pandemic required the full attention of city staff, that also meant the work that was being done by the CACH was cut short as well. The Safe Sleep Subcommittee was in the midst of working with staff to develop a "menu" of options for the City Council to consider for various safe sleep programs the city could implement. In addition, this letter will highlight some important recommendations that were already made by the full CACH, and presented to the City Council but to date have not been addressed outside of the context of the COVID-19 response or with a meaningful long-term commitment.

Over the course of a number of public meetings, listening intently to public comments, and receiving correspondence from the public about various potential types of programs for people experiencing homelessness to be afforded a legal place to sleep, it was clear that amongst the housed community, there is a preference for options that are for 24 hours indoor shelters, and tiny home villages. Many people experiencing homelessness stated a preference for the autonomy of being allowed to camp outdoors independently or in a self-managed camp. In practice, it does not seem likely that the City of Santa Cruz will ever have adequate capacity in its shelter system to meet the needs of 100% of the people who sleep outside, and for this reason, I believe we need to continue to develop city policies such as a revised camping ordinance that does not generally criminalize the act of sleeping outside, and that designates places where people are allowed to camp, even though our community prefers indoor shelter. We must continue efforts to create additional capacity for managed indoor shelters such as navigation centers, tiny home villages, and temporary indoor shelters while continuing to refine our policing practices: moving to an outreach-first model of enforcement where social workers are the primary contact with the people sleeping outside, and designating lawful areas for people to sleep will result in better outcomes, is more cost effective, and will allow police officers to spend more time dealing with more serious threats to public health and safety instead of essentially continually herding people experiencing homelessness who sleep outside from one area of the city to another.

So in addition to creating a number of lawful outdoor safe-sleeping zones spread throughout the city and moving to an outreach-first model of enforcement for infractions such as trespassing on public

property, the Safe Sleeping Committee was poised to present a menu of options for more substantial shelter programs to be adopted by the CACH and presented to Council: a navigation center either in a permanent building or sprung structure; tiny home village(s); a program for subsidizing tiny home/ADU construction on private residential property such as what has been implemented in Portland, OR and Los Angeles; new shelter programs in publicly-owned (or leased) buildings such as the Civic Auditorium, or shelter programs for families with school-age children in school gymnasiums; a developer incentive program for temporarily utilizing vacant buildings set to be demolished as shelters such as the former Gateway School (similar to a program proposed in Portland, OR); and presenting a continuum of management costs for outdoor managed sleeping areas from overnight or daytime only programs with minimal oversight and services to fully staffed, 24 hour managed programs.

The CACH never did make specific recommendations about sites for outdoor safe-sleep programs; this was probably the most controversial topic we were asked to look at, and the most challenging. However, the Safe Sleeping Subcommittee was in the midst of developing a rubric for siting criteria that the city could use in selecting a site that we felt was an improvement over the criteria developed when the city was poised to choose between sites at the Wharf Corporation Yard, the north Depot Park parking lot, a city-owned space on High Street, Lot 17 behind Wheel Works, Jessie Street Marsh or San Lorenzo Park. That work was ultimately not completed, but we felt adapting the city's existing scoring systems used by the planning department to weigh the site criteria which we listed in our interim recommendations report would be crucial in producing a fair, balanced siting recommendation that followed objective criteria and reduced neighborhood political influence in the site selection.

Finally, I want to take this opportunity to remind the public about the recommendations and suggestions that have already been made by the CACH, but to date have not been addressed by the City Council. Specifically: Recommendation #1 (the outreach-first model of enforcement); Rec. #2 (developing safe sleeping sites—beyond the temporary nature of the COVID-19 relief funded programs); Rec. #3 (development of additional long term indoor shelter capacity); Recs #6,7, 8 & 25 regarding models of safe sleeping programs and site selection criteria; Recs #4, 5, 16,17,18,19, 20 & 26 regarding modifications to the camping ordinance that reflect the values of the Ninth Circuit Court's Martin v Boise ruling; and (what I consider the most important steps the city should take) Policy suggestions #23 and 24 recommending a Strategic Action Plan on homelessness with eleven specified elements, and a commitment to making increased shelter capacity and new safe sleeping site programs as well as a new outreach-first model of enforcement the city's highest homelessness related priorities (note: these were not technically CACH recommendations as the CACH didn't have enough time in the deliberative process to agree on precise language).

June 16, 2020

Dear City Council,

Having served on the CACH, and been specifically involved in the subcommittee for community engagement, I would like to share some thoughts.

I joined the CACH because I believe that one of the most innovative and productive things we can do as a community is gain a greater understanding of one another as community members, including people in the homeless community. For 27 years, I have taught a form of "deep listening" that invites people to listen past their pre-conceived thought systems and beliefs for the kernel of truth another may offer. From this kind of listening, I believe, more agreeable solutions for the entire community may emerge. My past work as director of the National Community Resiliency Project--funded by the Kellogg Foundation--showed incredibly positive outcomes from this approach to community issues, including decreased crime rates.

While the CACH conducted two great community intake sessions (you have the results of these), we were about to embark on a deeper "community listening" program before the Corona virus struck.

While I do not know when we will be able to gather together as a community again, it may be possible to conduct some of these sessions online. I am still willing to offer some *pro bono* time to do this, and am extending this offer to Police Chief Andy Mills as well— as a way to dialogue with police, activists, residents and people in the homeless community. I envision two parts to such sessions:

Part I would be a session *only on how to listen* and would include securing agreements from all parties to follow guidelines, and to actually listen at Part II.

Part II would be an amended/abbreviated form of Dynamic Facilitation (DF), the model used in Wisdom Councils, and/or Convergent Facilitation, both of which I have recently trained in. My recent training in DF was, as I saw it, a part of my work for the CACH.

Even just launching such a pilot dialogue program would be so helpful, in my mind.

Having attended many Council, and of course, CACH meetings, what I experienced was not a true dialogue, with listening, understanding and generating solutions together (based on all concerns and insights), but rather, two-minute presentations to Council (or CACH) with the threat of a timer buzzing, and incredible restraints on Council/CACH members on responding with their true and heartfelt thinking.

The CACH was more helpful in that--in a somewhat more relaxed atmosphere--people were able to share a bit more fully. But the nature of government committees, including: lack of space to bring up a *new* issue that might actually be relevant; lack of space to truly converse, debate and reflect; time constraints on setting and circulating an agenda, and the hierarchical nature of this process really clarified in my mind the weaknesses of current processes in terms of bringing all voices to the table in a way that helps everyone feel heard and understood.

I know there is a better way. We, as a CACH, voted for at least one Community Listening program, and also for the City Council to explore Wisdom Councils as an innovative model for moving forward on difficult subjects in the community. Indeed, it was a conversation I had with Chief Andy Mills about the need for such dialogue (even more so now!) that prompted me to apply for the CACH.

I am happy to speak with any of you about any of these ideas. Without committing initially, we might at least dialogue about *what form* of these ideas might make sense for Santa Cruz today. We face many grave challenges and, indeed, many challenges to come. If we can find a better way to communicate with one another, I believe we could create at least some healthy, positive paths forward.

Yours Truly,

Ami

Ami Chen Mills-Naim
ami@amichen.com
650-424-8984

The Work Must Continue

I believe that it is vitally important that any sort of body that is considering legislation or policy that affects people who are homeless needs to have some sort of vehicle for capturing the experiences, concerns and recommendations of those who live outdoors and of the people who deliver services to them.

It is the nature of homelessness in this country right now; that people who are homeless are people who have fallen through the cracks in our other systems. It is impossible for someone who is housed to imagine the realities of the lives of people who live outside without directly listening to their experiences... Without understanding precisely which cracks people fall through and how they fall through them, to extend the metaphor. I would also argue that it is impossible to write legislation and policy regarding people who are homeless without this understanding as well.

Therefore, I think it is vitally important for the city of Santa Cruz to continue to have some sort of body for capturing this institutional knowledge and wisdom, on an ongoing basis.

Another aspect of the Community Advisory Committee on Homelessness that must also continue is including housed citizens in the process I mention above. This serves two purposes; to get immediate feedback from people who are housed on the recommendations from people who aren't housed and the people who provide services to them, and to provide a venue for the greater community to undertake the cause of assisting those in need among us.

I do not believe that it is unrealistic for our community to find lasting solutions to the issue of homelessness here, that benefit us all. However, for that to happen we must continue the work that was undertaken by the Community Advisory Committee on Homelessness.

Cordially,

Evan Morrison
evanstruth@gmail.com
408-761-9930

Current positions:
Program Manager, Paul Lee Loft at Housing Matters
Executive Director, Santa Cruz Free Guide

On December 10, 2019 the Community Advisory Committee on Homelessness (CACH) presented immediate recommendations which included shelter, bathrooms, and community engagement. During the Q&A portion of the presentation there was discussion about the ability of committee members to remain engaged in the process. Specific concerns included not feeling heard and feeling alienated. I am writing this letter because I have heard the same sentiments from people on all sides of this issue: unhoused, housed, mothers who walked their kids to daycare past the Gateway Camp, business owners, land owners, CACH members who I work with on a weekly basis, and others.

The issues we discuss during CACH meetings have high stakes just as the issues debated at Council have high stakes. I can see how difficult it is for members of our community to remain engaged both in the public and private realms. Emotions run high. Sometimes decorum flies out the window. Then if we stand by our commitments, we return again and again to work with people who have opinions that differ from our own. In these conversations most of us are learning how to respectfully disagree with one another while building relationships. The work ahead of us is to continue to build these relationships, to continue to engage, and to disagree without alienating or disregarding each other.

You and I will not always see eye to eye on every issue, but I am committed to returning to you. Sometimes I may be a little afraid. Sometimes it may take me more time than you or I would like. However, it is my hope that our relationship grows because of our differences. We must continue to return to each other respectfully if we are to have a thriving democratic system of governance. We are more creative, resilient and effective when people of differing backgrounds come together to find solutions that address the concerns of our city.

Looking forward to working with you,

Candice Elliott

Co-Chair

Community Advisory Committee on Homelessness