ITEM 10.Q.

MOORPARK CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA REPORT

TO: **Honorable City Council**

FROM: **Hugh R. Riley, Assistant City Manager**
BY: **Jessica Sandifer, Management Analyst**

DATE: **July 13, 2010 (CC Meeting of 07/21/10)**

SUBJECT: **Consider Response to Grand Jury Report**

DISCUSSION

On May 21, 2010, the City received a letter and a report from the 2009-2010 Grand Jury entitled "Where are you sleeping tonight?" The letter requested that the City respond to the report's recommendations within 90-days of submittal of the report.

A draft response letter is attached.

FISCAL IMPACT

None.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Approve letter as written.

Attachment 1 – Grand Jury Response Letter
Attachment 2 – May 21, 2010 Report, "Where are you sleeping?"

ATTACHMENT 1

City of Moorpark

799 Moorpark Avenue, Moorpark, California 93021 (805) 517-6200 fax (805) 532-2530

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

July 21, 2010

H.G. Kelley, Foreman
Ventura County Grand Jury
800 South Victoria Avenue, L#3751
Ventura, CA 93009

Dear Foreman Kelley and Ventura County Grand Jury:

The City of Moorpark is in receipt of the Ventura County Grand Jury's Final Report "Where are you sleeping tonight?" issued May 20, 2010. In the Grand Jury's May 21, 2010 transmittal letter, the City was requested to state whether we concur, concur in part, or disagree with the Grand Jury's Findings and, if we disagree, explain why. Further, for each applicable recommendation, state our intent concerning implementation.

FINDINGS

With respect to findings F-01 to F-42 the City of Moorpark concurs with the Grand Jury's findings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R-1 – Both public agencies and nonprofit organizations should be adding low-income rental housing. Other entities should be encouraged to do so by governmental agencies.
The City has previously implemented this recommendation as evidenced by the 252 units of low-income rental housing built in the City since 2004.The City also falls within the jurisdiction of the Area Housing Authority of the County of Ventura (AHA) who provides 30 rental units for extremely-low and very-low income elderly individuals and 131 Section 8 Housing Choice vouchers that serve 290 individuals in our City. Along with the measures that have already been taken, there are plans for sixty (60) additional units to be built in the City within the next five (5) years including twenty units to be built by the AHA on land provided to them by the City. . The City has also adopted new density bonus language that is consistent with the State density bonus requirements and goes one step further by providing a 100% density bonus for projects that are 100% affordable.

JANICE S. PARVIN ROSEANN MIKOS KEITH F. MILLHOUSE DAVID POLLOCK MARK VAN DAM

R-2 – The Cities should take a leading role in coordinating services and resources directed at eliminating or minimizing homelessness in their communities through marshaling and motivating volunteers to assist with programs for the homeless.
The City will continue to support the existing regional efforts directed at eliminating or minimizing homelessness.. The City has supported the RAIN program for the past three fiscal years with its CDBG grant funds and is willing to continue to support these and other efforts through future allocations of its CDBG grant funds and other funds.

R-3 – The County and the Cities should make every effort to ensure that the original goal of the Strategy, to reduce homelessness within the County by 50% during the first five years (2008-2012), is accomplished.
The City contributes funds to the homeless service organizations in the County as a way of supporting the Strategy's goal of reducing homelessness by 50% by 2012.

R-4 – Cities without a homelessness task force, Fillmore, Moorpark, and Port Hueneme, should consider establishing one.
The City recognizes the importance of homelessness and has assigned a Standing Committee of the City Council to periodically review the situation. A homelessness task force for the City is not recommended since our homeless problem at this time is minimal. The Homeless Count identified 7 homeless persons in Moorpark in 2009 and only 1 homeless person in 2010. The Ventura County Homeless and Housing Coalition agrees with the City's assessment of our situation and suggests that if our homeless numbers begin to increase in the future it would be more efficient for the City to join with a neighboring task force to create a more comprehensive approach.

R-5 – Innovative and effective programs developed by Cities and other organizations should be documented and replicated in other areas of the County that lack such programs.
The City has always monitored these developments and will continue to do so.

R-6 – Cities that have not pursued grant funds, or have been unsuccessful in receiving them, should aggressively seek such funds.
The City pursues CDBG funds to assist non-profit organizations within the City with helping the homeless and providing eviction prevention assistance to support those at-risk of becoming homeless and will support regional efforts to do so.

R-7 – The County and all Cities should continue to recognize and publicly thank the various nonprofit organizations, faith-based organizations, and other volunteer groups for their ongoing and highly effective support of the homeless population in Ventura County. *The City has and will continue to recognize and publicly thank the various non-profit organizations, faith based organizations, and other*

volunteer groups for their ongoing and highly effective support of the homeless population in Ventura County.

Sincerely,

Janice Parvin
Mayor

cc: Honorable City Council
Honorable Kevin J. McGee, Presiding Judge
Steven Kueny, City Manager
Hugh R. Riley, Assistant City Manager
David Moe, Redevelopment Manager

ATTACHMENT 2

county of ventura

Grand Jury
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009
(805) 477-1600
Fax: (805) 477-1610
grandjury.countyofventura.org

May 21, 2010

Council Chairperson
City of Moorpark
799 Moorpark Avenue
Moorpark, CA 93021

Subject: Grand Jury Report *Where are You Sleeping Tonight?*

Dear Council Chairperson:

Enclosed is a copy of the Ventura County 2009-2010 Grand Jury report titled, *Where are You Sleeping Tonight?*

This report is being provided to you as the City Council Chairperson. It is being provided to you two working days prior to its public release in accordance with the provisions of Penal Code §933.05(f). Please note that under the provisions of that code section no officer, agency, department, or governing body of a public agency shall disclose any contents of the report prior to public release by the Grand Jury.

Under Penal Code §933(c), the Grand Jury requests that you respond to the report's recommendations within 90 days of submittal of this report to you. The form of your response is set forth in Penal Code §933.05(a) through (c), a summary of which follows:

- State whether you concur, concur in part, or disagree with the Grand Jury's *findings*.
- Explain the reasons why you disagree in whole or in part with each applicable *finding*.
- For each applicable *recommendation*, state if it has already been implemented, will be implemented (with expected date of implementation), will not be implemented (with an explanation of the reason), or requires further study.

Your response should be sent to:

Ventura County Grand Jury
800 S. Victoria Ave., L#3751
Ventura, CA 93009

In accordance with Penal Code §933(c), a copy of your response should be sent to:

Honorable Kevin J. McGee, Presiding Judge
Superior Court of California, Ventura County
P.O. Box 6489
Ventura, CA 93006

Sincerely,

H. G. Kelley, Foreman

RECEIVED
MAY 21 2010
CITY OF MOORPARK
OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

cc: HCC, C.M., ACM, D. Moe, D. Bobardt, Capt. Nelson; file / Corrig.)

Ventura County Grand Jury
2009 - 2010

Final Report

Where are You Sleeping Tonight?

Date Issued
May 20, 2010

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Where are You Sleeping Tonight?

Summary

Homelessness does not discriminate . . . families with children, single adults, teenagers, and elderly individuals of all races struggle with the devastating effects of homelessness. Homelessness exists across the country, in small rural towns, suburban neighborhoods, and large metropolises.

The 2009-2010 Ventura County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) chose to investigate the homelessness situation in Ventura County (County) to determine the effectiveness and success of the County's *10-Year Strategy to End Homelessness for Ventura County* (Strategy).

The Grand Jury found that the total homeless population in the County decreased from 2,193 to 1,815 between 2009 and 2010, a net decrease of 378 people (17.2%).

The Grand Jury found that the increase in homelessness over the last 25 years is due to the increasing shortage of affordable rental housing and increasing numbers of people experiencing poverty.

The Grand Jury recommends that both public agencies and nonprofit organizations take steps to add to the inventory of low-income rental housing. Other entities (such as private developers) should be encouraged by governmental agencies to do likewise.

The Grand Jury recommends that all 10 cities in the County (Cities) should take a lead role in coordinating services and resources directed at eliminating or minimizing homelessness in their communities, through marshaling and motivating volunteers to assist with homeless programs.

Background

The Grand Jury chose to investigate the homelessness situation in the County in order to determine the effectiveness and success of the County's plan to end homelessness.

In 2001, President George W. Bush challenged the 100 largest cities in the United States to combat homelessness. In June 2003, at the United States Conference of Mayors, the mayors unanimously passed a resolution that strongly encouraged cities large and small to create and implement strategic plans to end homelessness (including chronic homelessness) in 10 years.

In June 2007, the Ventura County Homeless and Housing Coalition (VCHHC) published the Strategy, the plan to end homelessness during a 10-year period.

In 2007, an estimated 671,859 people across the United States experienced homelessness, with 159,732 residing in California. There was a total of 1,961 homeless in the County.

Methodology

The Grand Jury interviewed the following VCHHC personnel:

- Executive Director
- Vice President of Community Impact
- Treasurer
- Project Manager for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Management Information System (MIS)

The Grand Jury sent a survey letter to the County Board of Supervisors (BOS) and to the Cities requesting information on their respective efforts to end homelessness. The Grand Jury reviewed newspaper articles, conducted internet searches for related material, and attended VCHHC meetings.

Findings

F-01. The Stewart B. McKinney Act, 42 U.S.C. § 11301, *et seq*. (1994) defines the homeless as an individual or family who:

- lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and
- has a primary nighttime residence that is:
  - a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for persons with mental illness), or
  - an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized, or
  - a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings

F-02. The National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH)[1] reported that nearly 3.5 million people worldwide experience homelessness each year. According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH)[2], in 2007 there were 671,859 homeless in the U. S., and of that total 159,732 were residing in California. This figure represents 23.8% of the total homeless population in the U.S. [Ref-01, Ref-02]

F-03. James J. O'Connell, in his paper *Premature Mortality in Homeless Populations: A Review of the Literature* published by National Health Care for the Homeless Council states, "Life on the streets is brutal and short. The average age of death for homeless people is 30 years less than that of housed people." [Ref-03]

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[1] The National Coalition for the Homeless is a national network of people who are currently experiencing or who have experienced homelessness, activists and advocates, community-based and faith-based service providers, and others.

[2] The National Alliance to End Homelessness is a nonpartisan, mission-driven organization committed to preventing and ending homelessness in the United States.

F-04. The NCH cites two tendencies for the increase in homelessness over the last 25 years as follows:
[Ref-04]

- increasing shortage of affordable rental housing
- increase in poverty

F-05. As incomes fail to keep pace with housing costs, Americans face difficult choices:

- trying to put food on the table
- paying for quality healthcare
- educating their children
- keeping a roof over their heads

Those who cannot manage that balancing act become homeless or live on the periphery of homelessness. [Ref-04]

F-06. Over 5.2 million low-income households in the U.S. have serious housing problems due to high housing costs, substandard housing conditions, or both. [Ref-05]

F-07. It is estimated that 15.8 million people in the U.S. are living in "worst case housing" conditions, meaning they spend 50 percent of their income on rent and earn only 50 percent of the area median income or live in severely substandard housing. [Ref-05]

F-08. About half of the people who experience homelessness over the course of a year are single adults. [Ref-06]

F-09. About 80 percent of single adult shelter users enter the homeless system (System) only once or twice, stay just over a month, and do not return.
[Ref-06]

F-10. About nine percent of single adult shelter users enter nearly five times a year and stay nearly two months each time. This group utilizes 18 percent of the System's resources. [Ref-06]

F-11. About 10 percent of single adult shelter users enter the system just over twice a year and spend an average of 280 days per stay—virtually living in the System and using up over 50 percent of the System's resources. These individuals are defined as *chronically homeless*. [Ref-06]

F-12. The chronically homeless often cycle between living on the streets and living in hospitals, jails, and other institutions. They often have complex medical problems, serious mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, and/or alcohol or drug addiction. [Ref-06]

F-13. Some of the ways in which homelessness is costly to society are:
[Ref-07]

- hospitalization and medical treatment

  - the *New England Journal of Medicine* reports homeless people spent an average of four days longer per hospital visit, at a cost of $2,414
  - a study found that the average cost to California hospitals of treating a substance abuser is about $8,360 for those in treatment, and $14,740 for those who are not
- jail or prison - a University of Texas two-year survey of homeless individuals showed that each person cost the taxpayers $14,480 per year
- emergency shelter - the cost of a bed funded by HUD's Emergency Shelter Grants program is approximately $8,067 per year
- lost opportunity - the most difficult cost to quantify is the loss of future productivity

F-14. The *Ventura County 2009 Homeless Count*, conducted on 27 January 2009, reported that:
[Ref-08]

- there were 2,193 homeless adults and children
  - 1,842 (84%) adults
  - 351 (16%) children
- of the 1,842 adults
  - 1,232 (67%) were men
  - 610 (33%) were women
- there were 161 families consisting of:
  - 41 two-parent families
  - 120 single-parent families

F-15. The *Ventura County 2010 Homeless Count*, conducted on 26 January 2010, reported that:
[Ref-09]

- there were 1,815 homeless adults and children
  - 1,604 (88%) adults
  - 211 (12%) children
- of the 1,604 adults
  - 1,078 (67%) were men
  - 526 (33%) were women
- there were 117 families consisting of:
  - 30 two-parent families
  - 87 single-parent families

F-16. The total homeless population in the County decreased by 378 people between the 2009 and 2010 homeless counts. This is a net decrease of 17.2% as shown below:
[Ref-08, Ref-09]

2009 AND 2010 Homeless Counts

CITY	2009	2010	Net change
Camarillo	13	15	2
Fillmore	4	5	1
Moorpark	7	1	-6
Ojai	60	52	-8
Oxnard	679	520	-159
Port Hueneme	1	9	8
Santa Paula	91	54	-37
Simi Valley	303	229	-74
Thousand Oaks	147	106	-41
Ventura	623	601	-22
Unincorporated Areas	265	223	-42
Total	2,193	1,815	-378

F-17. In 1995, HUD began requiring communities to submit a single application for McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants[3] in order to streamline the funding application process, encourage coordination of housing and service providers on a local level, and promote the development of Continuums of Care (CoC)[4]. [Ref-10]

F-18. The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness is a federal agency established by Congress to be responsible for supporting and encouraging local jurisdictions to develop and implement 10-Year strategies. [Ref-11]

F-19. Prior to the introduction of these 10-Year strategies, the typical method of managing homelessness involved moving homeless people from food and meal programs to emergency shelters and back to food and meal programs, day after day, week after week, month after month, and for an increasing number of homeless persons, year after year. [Ref-11]

F-20. Managing homelessness also involves moving homeless people in and out of motels, winter shelters, and correctional institutions in an endless cycle of homelessness. [Ref-11]

[3] McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants are the primary source of funding for programs serving homeless people, providing assistance for families with children experiencing homelessness, people experiencing chronic homelessness, and other people experiencing homelessness.

[4] A Continuum of Care is a regional or local planning body that coordinates housing and services funding for homeless families and individuals.

F-21. The purpose of these 10-Year plans was to develop courses of action, not to manage homelessness, but to end it. [Ref-11]

F-22. The VCHHC has functioned as the lead planning organization for homeless assistance in the County since 1991.

F-23. The mission of VCHHC, a nonprofit organization, is to develop and maintain a county-wide cooperative effort to address the needs of homeless individuals, those at risk of becoming homeless, and those in need of low income housing.

F-24. VCHHC does the following:

- advises the various agencies and the Cities on the procedures to apply for Federal and State grant monies which are available to assist the homeless
- encourages the Cities to identify the programs, procedures, and methods designed to combat and prevent homelessness and to provide needed services to assist the homeless

F-25. Beginning in early 2006, a working group of representatives from both the public and private sectors met at least monthly to develop a plan to end homelessness.

F-26. In June 2007, after 18 months of effort, the Strategy was adopted by VCHHC. [Ref-11]

F-27. The initial goal of the Strategy was to reduce homelessness within the County by 50% during the first five years (2008-2012) of implementation.

F-28. The Strategy focuses new and existing tools and resources on three sub-populations of homeless persons:
[Ref-11]

- chronic homeless persons[5]
- episodic homeless persons[6]
- persons at risk of becoming homeless[7]

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[5] A person who is "chronically homeless" is an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more, or has at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years. A disabling condition is defined as a diagnosable substance abuse disorder, serious mental illness, developmental disability including the co-occurrence of two or more of these conditions.

[6] Episodic homeless persons are individuals or families who are homeless for a short period of time—days, weeks, or months—not a year or more.

[7] Persons at risk of becoming homeless have limited income and often have to choose between paying their rent or mortgage and other daily living costs which often put them at risk of becoming homeless.

F-29. The Strategy focuses on seven activities: [Ref-11]

- establishing the community's commitment
- adopting "Guiding Principles"
- determining the number of persons to be served
- recommending service and housing needs
- developing community involvement
- funding the strategy
- measuring performance

F-30. The Strategy contains 22 recommendations to end homelessness. These recommendations focus on:

- providing more housing, whether emergency shelters, transitional housing, or permanent housing
- providing services to assist people towards independence, and to help prevent more people from becoming homeless

Not all recommendations are applicable to each city in the County. [Ref-11]

F-31. The County Human Services Agency, Homeless Services Program publishes a brochure listing resources for homeless people in the east and west County areas. These brochures provide information on places in the County to find food, shelter, clothing, counseling, and other services to aid homeless people. [Ref-12]

F-32. When the Strategy was completed, the local Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH) adopted the chart below. These goals for additional housing needs are for the first five years of the Strategy. [Ref-13]

Additional Housing Goals

Jurisdiction	Permanent Affordable Housing	Permanent Supportive Housing	Shelter Beds	Transitional Housing
Camarillo	38	35	19	12
Fillmore	11	10	5	3
Moorpark	17	16	9	5
Ojai	5	4	2	1
Oxnard	80	73	40	24
Port Hueneme	2	2	1	1
Santa Paula	24	22	12	7
Simi Valley	39	36	20	12
Thousand Oaks	22	20	11	7
Unincorporated	15	14	8	4
Ventura	47	42	23	14
Total	300	274	150	90

F-33. In addition to the beds listed above, the Strategy envisioned the creation of a 20-bed, social-model detoxification program for adults. These beds would be located in both the east and west County. [Ref-13]

F-34. Seven cities in the County have task forces, comprised of private citizens, members of faith-based communities, service providers, elected officials, and city and County employees:

- Camarillo Workforce Housing Group
- Ojai Valley Homeless Task Force
- Oxnard Commission on Homelessness
- Santa Paula Task Force on Homelessness
- Simi Valley Task Force on Homelessness
- Conejo Affordable Housing Workgroup (Thousand Oaks)
- Ventura Social Services Task Force

F-35. In November 2009, the VCHHC published a progress report on the Strategy. In the report they state, "As with any plan, some parts have succeeded far beyond the hopes of the working group that created this document, while other parts still have challenges to overcome." [Ref-13]

F-36. The actual total number of housing units achieved during the period June 2007 to November 2009 and planned are as follows:

Type of Housing	Goal	Achieved	Planned
Permanent Affordable Housing	300	178	*215
Permanent Supportive Housing	274	78	
Shelter Beds	150	-14	
Transitional Housing	90	-40	**100

* 215 units are in development

** All of these beds are planned at the Kingdom Center in Ventura. Other cities also need transitional housing. [Ref-13]

F-37. There have been no detoxification beds established anywhere in the County. [Ref-13]

F-38. To date, community involvement in supporting homeless services has consisted of efforts of representatives from a wide-range of community groups including:
[Ref-13]

- businesses
- coalitions and committees
- community service clubs
- educational institutions
- faith-based agencies/organizations

- for-profit organizations
- housing developers
- local government
- neighborhood associations
- nonprofit organizations
- private foundations
- individual concerned residents

F-39. The County is a quarter of the way into the implementation of the Strategy.

F-40. In their December 2009 newsletter, VCHHC reported that some of the successes achieved during the first 30 months were model programs:

- the Homeless Prevention Fund started by the City of Ventura's Social Services Task Force has kept dozens of families in their housing at an average cost of $700 per incident
- the "One Stop Multi-Service Center"[8] takes place each Tuesday morning at the Health Care Agency Auditorium in Ventura, provides a variety of resources for persons who are facing homelessness
- the Alliance to House the Homeless in Simi Valley has coordinated services and housing for persons in that community
- Many Meals in Santa Paula provides meals that feed hundreds of local homeless weekly

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[8] The One-Stop Multi-Service Center is a collaboration of County-wide public and private agencies sponsored by the Health Care Agency. Staff and volunteers provide the following services:

- medical services
- application assistance for Ventura County Medical Center's medical services discount program
- legal assistance
- counseling services
- housing application assistance
- food stamp and general relief application assistance
- homeless referral services
- veterans' services
- sack lunches
- links to other community-based public and private agencies

F-41. The cities responding to the Grand Jury survey reported numerous accomplishments. Some of the specific accomplishments are: (Att-02)

- Camarillo - has supported programs of CoC with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds as well as general fund grants
- Simi Valley - has submitted a joint application with Camarillo, Thousand Oaks, and Ventura for the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program[9] (HPRP) funds in the amount of $1.2 million
- Thousand Oaks - with funds from CDBG provides financial support to programs that assist families in crisis, including emergency shelter funds or rental/lease assistance
- Simi Valley - was awarded a grant in the amount of $801,674 in Neighborhood Stabilization Program[10] (NSP) funds
- Simi Valley Police Department - when it is determined that individuals being released from custody are homeless, they are provided with referral information on available homeless services, and they may stay at a facility at the police station temporarily instead of being released with no place to sleep
- Simi Valley - has adopted a Parking Citation Alternative Remedies (PCAR) pilot program to provide an alternative sentencing program that allows the homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless, under certain circumstances, to perform community services as payment for Simi Valley parking violations

F-42. Some of the recent examples of governmental and non-governmental entities' efforts to end homelessness as reported in the *Ventura County Star* are:

- in Simi Valley, the creation of an innovative nonprofit called *The Wide Umbrella*, aimed at helping families in danger of losing their homes to foreclosure or those who just need help with housing for a few months
- the City of Ventura has allocated $22,000 in public money for a pilot program that would allow certain vehicles and qualified participants to legally park overnight in one of two designated church parking lots. This program is for individuals who are forced to sleep in their vehicles. The intent of the program is to provide temporary relief while people seek stable housing

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[9] American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 includes $1.5 billion for the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program.

[10] The Neighborhood Stabilization Program was established for the purpose of stabilizing communities that have suffered from foreclosures and abandonment.

- a small Ojai charity, *Hearts of Fire Project*, donated a decades-old, but still working, recreational vehicle to a homeless healthcare-giver and single mother
- donations to *Ventura County Together*, a joint effort of several local nonprofit groups to raise money for those in need of food, shelter, and healthcare, will be matched by the Amgen Foundation, a philanthropic affiliate of the Thousand Oaks biotechnology company
- the BOS decided that the County will share its allocation of federal stimulus money for homeless prevention with the four cities (Ventura, Camarillo, Thousand Oaks, and Simi Valley) that failed to receive any grant funds. The County was awarded $857,000 under the Federal Homeless Prevention and Re-Housing program, to be used in the County's unincorporated areas and its five smallest cities
- in early April 2010, the BOS agreed to spend up to $3.1 million on year-round shelters and other programs for the homeless. The funding package includes:
    - $2 million in matching grants for cities, nonprofits or other groups that want to open year-round shelters
    - $600,000 over three years will go to open a detoxification center for alcoholics and drug addicts
    - $500,000 to start a "housing trust fund" for affordable housing projects

Conclusions

C-01. Homelessness remains a major problem, not only within the County, but across the entire United States. (F-02, F-03, F-30, F-31)

C-02. Due to the poor economic times, more people are at greater risk of losing their housing. (F-04 through F-07)

C-03. The primary cause of homelessness is a lack of affordable housing. Adding low-income rental housing appears to be the most expedient and lowest-cost approach to reducing homelessness. (F-04 through F-07)

C-04. Tenant-based rental assistance to low- and very low-income households can often forestall evictions and prevent homelessness. (F-04 through F-07)

C-05. The chronic homeless are the hardest to reach and help, since they often have complex medical problems, serious mental illnesses, and/or suffer from alcohol or drug addiction. (F-11, F-12)

C-06. The cost of homelessness to society can be quite high, particularly for those with chronic illnesses. Since they have no regular place to stay,

people who are homeless use a variety of public systems in an inefficient and costly way. (F-13)

C-07. Emergency shelters are a costly alternative to low-cost permanent housing. While sometimes necessary for short-term crises, they too often serve as long-term housing. (F-13)

C-08. Preventing a homeless episode or ensuring a speedy transition into stable permanent housing can result in significant cost savings. (F-13)

C-09. Homelessness in the County is decreasing, according to the latest homeless count. (F-14 through F-16)

C-10. The Strategy has raised the bar for government agencies, nonprofits, and the faith-based community to work together and to coordinate programs and funding to best meet the needs of a particular community and the County as a whole. (F-27 through F-30)

C-11. The Strategy recognizes that preventing homelessness, as well as housing the chronically and episodically homeless, is not only humane but cost-effective. (F-27 through F-30)

C-12. Eliminating chronic homelessness requires establishing permanent housing with supportive services, and implementing policies to prevent high-risk people from becoming chronically homeless. (F-26 through F-32)

C-13. Not all Cities in the County have a homelessness task force in place. The cities that do have a task force vary in their participation from active to non-active. (F-34)

C-14. The County as a whole has made modest gains in the number of permanent supportive housing beds, but has actually lost beds in the areas of shelter beds and transitional housing. (F-36)

C-15. Plans to create sobering stations in several areas of the County have yet to go beyond the planning stage. (F-37)

C-16. The Strategy has been successful in bringing together a diverse cross section of public and private groups. (F-38)

C-17. Some Cities and private entities have developed and implemented creative and effective programs to deal with homelessness. (F-40 through F-42)

C-18. Several Cities have aggressively pursued grants available through HPRP and NSP. (F-41)

C-19. The County as a whole is making strides on most of the 22 recommendations in the Strategy through the energy and dedication of volunteers. (F-40 through F-42)

Recommendations

R-01. Both public agencies and nonprofit organizations should be adding low-income rental housing. Other entities should be encouraged to do so by governmental agencies. (C-01 through C-03)

R-02. The Cities should take a leading role in coordinating services and resources directed at eliminating or minimizing homelessness in their communities through marshaling and motivating volunteers to assist with programs for the homeless. (C-10)

R-03. The County and the Cities should make every effort to ensure that the original goal of the Strategy, to reduce homelessness within the County by 50% during the first five years (2008-2012), is accomplished. (C-10 through C-12)

R-04. Cities without a homelessness task force, Fillmore, Moorpark, and Port Hueneme, should consider establishing one. (C-13)

R-05. Innovative and effective programs developed by Cities and other organizations should be documented and replicated in other areas of the County that lack such programs. (C-17)

R-06. Cities that have not pursued grant funds, or have been unsuccessful in receiving them, should aggressively seek such funds. (C-18)

R-07. The County and all Cities should continue to recognize and publicly thank the various nonprofit organizations, faith-based organizations, and other volunteer groups for their ongoing and highly effective support of the homeless population in Ventura County. (C-19)

Responses

Responses Required From:

Board of Supervisors, County of Ventura (R-03, R-07)

City Council, City of Camarillo (R-01, R-02, R-03, R-05, R-06, R-07)

City Council, City of Fillmore (R-01 through R-07)

City Council, City of Moorpark (R-01 through R-07)

City Council, City of Ojai (R-01, R-02, R-03, R-05, R-06, R-07)

City Council, City of Oxnard (R-01, R-02, R-03, R-05, R-06, R-07)

City Council, City of Port Hueneme (R-01 through R-07)

City Council, City of Santa Paula (R-01, R-02, R-03, R-05, R-06, R-07)

City Council, City of Simi Valley (R-01, R-02, R-03, R-05, R-06, R-07)

City Council, City of Thousand Oaks (R-01, R-02, R-03, R-05, R-06, R-07)

City Council, City of Ventura (R-01, R-02, R-03, R-05, R-06, R-07)

Responses Requested From:

City Manager, City of Camarillo (R-01, R-02, R-03, R-05, R-06, R-07)

City Manager, City of Fillmore (R-01 through R-07)

City Manager, City of Moorpark (R-01 through R-07)
City Manager, City of Ojai (R-01, R-02, R-03, R-05, R-06, R-07)
City Manager, City of Oxnard (R-01, R-02, R-03, R-05, R-06, R-07)
City Manager, City of Port Hueneme (R-01 through R-07)
City Manager, City of Santa Paula (R-01, R-02, R-03, R-05, R-06, R-07)
City Manager, City of Simi Valley (R-01, R-02, R-03, R-05, R-06, R-07)
City Manager, City of Thousand Oaks (R-01, R-02, R-03, R-05, R-06, R-07)
City Manager, City of Ventura (R-01, R-02, R-03, R-05, R-06, R-07)

References

Ref-01. National Coalition for the Homeless website, *How Many People Experience Homelessness?*, dated July 2009.

http://www.nationalhomeless.org/factsheets/How_Many.html

Ref-02. National Alliance to End Homelessness website, State by State Homeless Count.

http://www.endhomelessness.org/section/data/homelessmap

Ref-03. O'Connell, J.J. *Premature Mortality in Homeless Populations: A Review of the Literature,* National Health Care for the Homeless Council, Inc., 2005.
http://www.nhchc.org/PrematureMortalityFinal.pdf

Ref-04. Fact Sheet published by the National Alliance to End Homelessness, *Why are People Homeless?,* dated July 2009.

http://www.nationalhomeless.org/factsheets/why.html

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Ref-07. National Alliance to End Homelessness website, *The Cost of Homelessness.*
http://www.endhomelessness.org/section/tools/tenyearplan/cost

Ref-08. The County of Ventura 2009 Homeless Count.

http://www.vchhc.org/images/PDFs/2009_Homeless_Count(1).pdf

Ref-09. The County of Ventura 2010 Homeless Count.
http://www.vchhc.org/images/PDFs/2010_Ventura_HomelessCount_Report.pdf

Ref-10. Explainer published by the National Alliance to End Homelessness, *What is a Continuum of Care?,* dated August 2007.

http://www.endhomelessness.org/content/article/detail/1744

Ref-11. *10-Year Strategy to End Homelessness for Ventura County* dated June 2007.
http://www.vchhc.org/images/PDFs/Ventura_10yrStrategy_REPORT_Aug07.pdf

Ref-12. County of Ventura Human Services Agency, Homeless Services Program publishes a brochure listing resources for Homeless People in the East and West county areas:

East County Resources
http://www.vchhc.org/images/PDFs/Homeless_Resources_East_County.pdf

West County Resources
http://www.vchhc.org/images/PDFs/Homeless_Resources_West_County.pdf

Ref-13. A Report on Progress on the 10-Year Strategy to End Homelessness in Ventura County, dated November, 2009.
http://www.vchhc.org/images/PDFs/publications/10YSProgressReport11-09.pdf

Commendations

The Grand Jury commends the efforts of the various governmental and non-governmental organizations that have come together for the purpose of ending homelessness in Ventura County.

Attachments

Att-01. Questionnaire 10-Year Strategy to End Homelessness

Att-02. Summary of Responses to the Grand Jury survey request to the 10 Cities

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Attachment-01

Questionnaire 10-Year Strategy to End Homelessness

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Questionnaire

10-Year Strategy to End Homelessness

1. Have you established the community commitment?
2. Have you created 300 additional units of permanent affordable housing?
3. Have you adopted a "zero tolerance" plan for discharging clients to the streets?
4. Have you created 150 additional shelter beds?
5. Have you applied for private foundation grants or stimulus money?
6. Have you appointed the Ventura County Coalition as an advisory body to the Interagency Council on Homelessness for Ventura County?
7. Please provide an update on these and any other programs your city has, for the "10-year Strategy to End Homelessness."
8. If any goals are not being met, please explain why you think they are not.
9. What is your city policy on homeless sleeping in their cars at designated areas?

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Attachment-02

Summary of Responses to the Grand Jury survey request to the 10 Cities

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Summary of Responses to the Grand Jury survey request to the 10 Cities

City of Camarillo

The City of Camarillo for more than 20 years has supported programs of "Continuum of Care" with Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) funds as well as general fund grants.

Camarillo supports the following programs:

- Ventura County Homeless Outreach Program
- RAIN (River Dwellers Aid Intercity Network)
- Turning Point Foundation
- Food Share

City of Fillmore

The city's commitment to prevent and end homelessness is reflected in the current Housing Element 92003 in the General Plan. Section 5 of the Housing Element contains goals, policies, and quantified objectives addressing homeless issues such as:

- provide a diversity of housing opportunities to enhance the City's living environment and to satisfy the shelter needs of Fillmore residents
- provide housing that is affordable to all economic segments of the community
- provide equal housing opportunities for all residents of Fillmore
- additionally, the city is currently processing the Housing Element (2010) update for the planning cycle of 2006 through 2014 and is retaining these and processing new programs addressing homeless issues associated with implementation of state government code 65583 (SB20) as related to emergency shelters, transitional housing and supportive housing. Moreover, the city has and continues to support groups/organizations who work on homeless causes such as "RAIN" and "Turning Point Foundations"

City of Ojai

The City of Ojai has contributed funds to HELP of Ojai in recent years to assist HELP's programs designed to assist the homeless, feed the hungry and prevent evictions.

City of Oxnard

The City of Oxnard has created several affordable housing developments: Sycamore Village (229 units) and Villa Victoria (59 units) for a total of 288 permanent affordable housing units.

Oxnard has not adopted a plan for discharging clients to the streets.

City of Moorpark

The number of homeless in the City of Moorpark (Moorpark) decreased from 14 to 7 from 2007 to the 2009 count. Since 2002, Moorpark has had some success in creating 62 units of permanent affordable rental housing, according to the criteria of the City of Moorpark, with 46% of the units affordable to extremely-low and very-low income persons.

City of Port Hueneme

A list of the City of Port Hueneme intended actions and timelines are:

- maintain the supply of sound, affordable housing through conservation and rehabilitation of housing
- ensure that a broad range of housing types are provided to meet the needs of both existing and future residents
- has established a trust fund of approximately $800,000 to contribute to the existing network of social services for homeless individuals and families to relieve homelessness
- has no emergency shelters, however, Port Hueneme continues to fund and operate its own HUD–designed small City Housing Authority, which serves as a local resource center where citizens including homeless persons can receive a wide range of information and referral, legal services, rental assistance, utility assistance, government benefits (Medicaid, food stamps, SSDI, SSI, veterans benefits), clothing and meals

City of Santa Paula

Currently, the City of Santa Paula has not adopted a formal policy establishing the community's commitments as outlined in the 10-year strategy. However, during the past three years, the City has worked to improve municipal services to all residents, including those of low-income.

City of Simi Valley

The City of Simi Valley has taken a strong leadership position in identifying the City's needs, and the available resources necessary to implement the Ventura County 10-Year Strategy to End Homelessness. The City has:

- approved and adopted the Simi Valley Task Force on Homelessness recommendations
- authorized the expenditure of $15,000 annually to fund federally mandated activities and services administered by the VCHHC
- since 2007, Simi Valley has created 37 housing units for extremely low- and very-low income households. In addition, Simi Valley created 109 low-income affordable housing units
- if the Simi Valley Police Department determines that an individual being released from custody is homeless, he or she will be provided with referral information on available homeless services and can stay in a facility at the station, instead of being released with no place to sleep

- the Simi Valley Public Action to Deliver Shelter, Winter Warming Shelter Program provided 3,548 beds from November 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009
- Simi Valley has applied for and was awarded a grant in the amount of $801,674 in Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds which will help fund some of the homeless plans.
- Simi Valley has submitted a joint application with Camarillo, Thousand Oaks, and Ventura for Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program funds in the amount of $1.2 million to the California Department of Housing and Community Development.
- Simi Valley adopted a Parking Citation Alternative Remedies pilot program to a provide alternative sentencing program that allows the homeless and those at risk of homelessness, under certain circumstances, to perform community services as payment for Simi Valley parking violations.
- The Simi Valley Alliance to House the Homeless was formed in November 2007. It is made up of representatives from three faith-based organizations, two nonprofit organizations and three County agencies.
- Simi Valley has allocated $15,000 annually to fund federally mandated activities and services administered by the VCHHC.

City of Thousand Oaks

There are 120 new permanent affordable housing units in pre-construction as of November 16, 2009.

Tenant-based rental assistance: from July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009, Thousand Oaks disbursed $347,766 in tenant-based rental assistance to low- and very-low income households selected from the Area Housing Authorities, Section 8 waiting list.

Social Services grants using Federal funds from the Community Development Block Grant and the Thousand Oaks own Social Services Endowment Fund: Thousand Oaks provides financial support to programs that assist families in crisis, including emergency shelter funds or rental/lease assistance. For the current fiscal year ending June 30, 2010, Thousand Oaks supports these programs as follows:

- Catholic Charities - $12,033
- Community Action of Ventura County - $9,526
- St. Vincent de Paul Society - $6,518

City of Ventura

The City of Ventura (Ventura) Community Services Department and Police Department staff has participated in the activities of the Ventura Social Services Task Force (VSSTF) for 18 years.

The City of Ventura has often been identified as the innovative leader in matters relating to homelessness within Ventura County. Successes include, but are not limited to:

- The River Haven project
- Community Partnership Grants (city general fund dollars to nonprofit social services providers)
- employment of a social worker
- the annual Winter Warming Shelter program in partnership with the city of Oxnard
- 50% of a city staff Manager dedicated to issues related to homelessness
- the nationally recognized Ventura Homelessness Prevention Fund