



CITY OF CARSON

Legislation Text

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Report to Mayor and City Council

Tuesday, November 16, 2021

Discussion

SUBJECT:

CONSIDER AN UPDATE TO THE CITY HOMELESS PLAN (CITY COUNCIL)

I. SUMMARY

In July 2018, the City of Carson Council approved the Carson Homeless Plan designed to leverage funding the City already had at its disposal. The Plan was created to maximize the use of various funding sources outside of its general fund to fully work with the limited resources and address the needs of both its homeless residents and those experiencing housing instability. While the city contracts with service providers to connect homeless individuals and families to needed resources, several support services and certain projects have been created to resolve the barrier of homelessness and bridge people into permanent housing. Staff has prepared a summary and update of actions completed along with desired actions that the City Council may have.

II. RECOMMENDATION

DISCUSS and PROVIDE direction.

III. ALTERNATIVES

TAKE another action that Council deems appropriate.

IV. BACKGROUND

An efficient homeless services program needs collaborative partnerships that can offer a menu of core services to a diverse population in need. Some are people suffering from mental illness and other chronic disabilities who have become an ongoing presence in our city centers, parks and open spaces. Others are not so visible, but still in need of

assistance - disadvantaged youth discharged from the foster care system with nowhere to go; single mothers with children, recently divorced or fleeing a situation of domestic violence; and low-income single adults and families without savings to help them weather an unexpected job loss, illness, Covid-19 or eviction.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND TEMPORARY HOUSING

Housing prices in California have reached a point that many Californians are increasingly having a difficult time paying for housing. This housing affordability issue could lead to homelessness. To address this issue the City has taken the following actions:

- In the past year, the City partnered with the private sector to increase the inventory of Workforce Housing by 504 units.
- Approximately 2 years ago, two housing projects were completed with 97 affordable units. Carson Arts Colony offered 91 apartments, including one, two and three bedrooms for households earning 60% or less of the area median income. Some of the arts amenities include sound-related music rooms with pianos, a woodshop, sever free, small studio spaces available to tenants on a rotating monthly basis. The City's Housing Authority contributed approximately eight million dollars towards the development cost of these projects to add to the affordable housing stock of the City.
- Through the Carson 2040 General Plan update, the City is ensuring ample properties in the City have high density designations to allow development of 5,618 affordable housings units by housing developers. This effort will ensure the City meets it RHNA requirements.

CONTINUING EFFORTS TO SERVE BASIC NEEDS

The City of Carson continues to maintain and strengthen the City's relationships with valued partners like Doors of Hope/Beacon Light Mission, Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, Harbor Interfaith Services, South Bay Workforce Investment Board Business & Career Center, California State University Dominguez Hills, Los Angeles Sheriff's Department Homeless Outreach Services Team (H.O.S.T.) and the South Bay Coalition to End Homelessness.

Several service projects that staff has been involved with on a continuous basis such as "Laundry of Love" providing laundry service weekly to the homeless. Continued collaborative efforts with the Salvation Army's Stillman Sawyer Family Service Center as an access/Drop-in Center that offers a variety of assistance to individuals and families. Services include the food bank, back to school backpacks & supplies, Christmas toys & food, referrals, job search assistance and A/C & Refrigeration Vocational Training Courses.

The City of Carson Homeless Committee also works in collaboration with the LASD (H.O.S.T.) Team and Long Beach Job Corps Center to assist with transitional housing for youth who have discharged from the foster care system with nowhere to go, can be placed with housing for up to two years while being educated and trained for successful careers.

COLLABORATION WITH FAITH BASED ORGANIZATIONS

Multiple churches and faith-based organizations have continued to work effectively to serve the homeless. Staff has continued to educate our faith-based organizations by equipping and educating the churches and their members about using a “responsible compassion” approach through training from the Southern California Housing Rights Center. Some of our churches are providing emergency shelter and intervention services to the homeless.

Staff has created and provided an annual Homeless Resource Fair along with several churches and non-profits focusing on services for the homeless ranging from Behavioral Health Services, Dental Services, DMV, Social Security, AIDS testing, showers, haircuts and clothing. The event was designed to provide a “hand-up” to those who are homeless and are in need of any of the services mentioned.

ENDING VETERAN HOMELESSNESS

June 2014, then First Lady Michelle Obama, issued challenges through an interagency initiative that called on cities, counties and states to commit to ending and preventing homelessness among Veterans in their communities. The City of Carson accepted that challenge and in November of 2019 completed a project that served Veterans applying through Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing program providing vouchers and supportive services to help Veterans who are homeless and their families. The Veterans Village project at Carson and Figueroa, is a 51-unit property equipped with a full kitchen, spacious seating areas, a computer lounge, pool table, piano and TV room were a tremendous response to the fight to ending Veteran’s homelessness.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

The State of California has made \$1.45 billion (FY 2021-22) in grant funding available to local public entities, including cities, counties, or other local public entities, such as housing authorities or Tribal Entities within California. Of that total, nearly \$360 million has been set aside for jurisdictions within Los Angeles County.

Homekey is an opportunity for state, regional, and local public entities to develop a broad range of housing types, including but not limited to hotels, motels, hostels, single- family homes and multifamily apartments, adult residential facilities, and manufactured housing, and to convert commercial properties and other existing buildings to Permanent or Interim Housing for the Target Population.

The City continues to look to ways that Measure H and Measure M funds can be incorporated in the City while collaborating with local partners such as LAHSA or the Department of Health Services to provide services and rental subsidies.

V. FISCAL IMPACT

For current support services, funding has been budgeted for FY 2021/22. In the event the City Council decides to move forward on support services or projects that are not budgeted, staff will seek additional local, state and federal funding opportunities.

VI. EXHIBITS

N/A

Prepared by: David C. Roberts, Jr., Assistant City Manager