



Administrative Report

P.1., File # 22-4147

Meeting Date: 5/10/2022

To: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

From: MICHAEL W. WEBB, CITY ATTORNEY JOY ABAQUIN, QUALITY OF LIFE
PROSECUTOR

TITLE

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON OPTIONS FOR ENHANCED RESPONSE TO HELP ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS INCLUDING IMPROVED COORDINATION WITH THE COUNTY.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Enhanced Response to Homelessness Program was initiated by the City Attorneys' Office and Police Department in June, 2019 at the request of the Mayor and City Council as an additional response to the impact of homelessness not only on people experiencing homelessness, but also on residents and the community. The Program has gotten many people off the streets and into permanent housing by responding to community concerns and reducing barriers to permanent housing. As one of the City's six-month objectives, the Mayor and City Council wanted to receive a report on options for enhanced response to help address homelessness, including improved coordination with the County. To further improve our response to homelessness, the City Attorney's Office recommends that the City employ a Mental Health Clinician to improve our response to people suffering from a mental health crisis, develop an Education Campaign so that concerned residents can make donations to the Quality of Life Account that will be used to help people on the streets in a constructive way, and employ a part-time residential aid to manage bridge housing which would enable us to seek additional transitional housing in Service Planning Area 8.

BACKGROUND

Since 2019, the Enhanced Response to Homelessness Program developed the first outdoor homeless court in Los Angeles County to bring the justice system and needed services into the community to unhoused individuals; Pallet Shelter transitional living and additional forms of bridge housing; employed a City Homeless Housing Navigator; and obtained funding to build new permanent supportive housing for individuals experiencing homelessness in Redondo Beach.



The Housing Initiative Court, also known as Homeless Court, has grown and expanded in a number of ways since 2019. Despite COVID-19 impacting court proceedings, it became apparent that bringing the Justice System to the unhoused individuals' community in a non-threatening environment along with necessary services together in one place was the true benefit of the outdoor court.



More and more booths and tables are being added for service providers at the Housing Initiative Court. The Public Defender Record Clearing Project offers services to expunge, seal and reduce criminal convictions; the Los Angeles City Attorney's HEART program expunges infractions; Exodus provides wrap around services through its Homeless Full Service Partnership; the Department of Mental Health evaluates and refers people to mental health services as well as prescribes and administers medication; Clear Recovery provides mental health and substance abuse counseling; the Department of Public Health Substance Abuse Prevention and Control Center makes referrals to detox and treatment programs; the Behavioral Health Services makes referrals to substance abuse treatment programs; and the South Bay Workforce Investment Board provides assistance with employment and job training. These homeless court services are available to all unhoused individual, including those that do not have criminal cases.



Since 2019, 104 people have been referred from criminal court to the Housing Initiative Court program; 74 people attended and accepted services; 23 people have been placed in some form of interim housing; and 27 people have been permanently housed and graduated from the program. Although this is a population that usually fails to appear to their court hearings, there is an average attendance rate of 81%, with some months at 100% in attendance.



In addition, the South Bay Cities Council of Governments (SBCCOG) awarded Redondo Beach and Hermosa Beach a grant in the amount of \$306,299 to expand the Housing Initiative Court to include Hermosa Beach cases and host the outdoors court for 6 out of 18 sessions as well as to fund five interim beds for bridge housing in Wilmington. Since January of 2021, the interim beds in Wilmington housed 13 people, six of which were permanently housed. Currently, all five units remain at full occupancy.

The Pallet Shelter has permanently housed 25 people, also remaining at full occupancy and a waitlist of at least 6 people at any time. When the Pallet Shelter was first established, permanent housing was easier to obtain through Recovery Rehousing, so many people were quickly housed within the first six months. However, all the units from the Recovery Rehousing are now fully occupied, so permanent housing has become more difficult to obtain throughout Los Angeles County. In addition, not only is there a shortage of Section 8 housing, but Section 8 housing is also difficult to obtain for those with no credit history. The application process for housing vouchers is very involved and takes months.



Starting January of this year, the City also employed Lila Omura as Redondo's Homeless Housing Navigator. From January to April, Lila Omura has placed ten people in permanent supportive housing (PSH); matched three people to a PSH housing units; placed five people in crisis housing; matched two individuals to housing vouchers; placed seven people in emergency shelter; placed three people in the pallet shelter; placed five people in the hospital for higher level of care; reunited two people with their families out of state; housed a veteran through the Long Beach VA services; linked two people to Exodus' Homeless Full Service Partnership (FSP); and conducted follow up retention for five people that have transitioned from the streets into permanent housing.

In 2019, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) point in time count reported 173 persons experiencing homelessness in Redondo Beach. In 2020, as the homeless population increased in surrounding cities and overall in Los Angeles County, Redondo's point in time count was relatively the same at 176 persons. Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, LAHSA did not hold a point in time count in 2021, so the City contracted with City Net to conduct a census. The census, which counted each individual that identified as experiencing homelessness, resulted in 92 persons experiencing homelessness in Redondo Beach. Both a point in time count and a City Net census were conducted this year. The results of both counts are expected to be available later this quarter. They use different methodologies, and their results will be useful in assessing what is working and what areas need to be improved.

The City of Redondo Beach has become a model for other cities to replicate, being the first to execute an outdoor homeless court in the County of Los Angeles and the first to set up a Pallet Shelter in the South Bay. Cities like Torrance and Long Beach are creating their own outdoor homeless court programs and pallet shelters. After seeing Redondo Beach's homeless court firsthand, Assembly Member Al Muratsuchi has drafted a bill, AB 2220 that would provide grant funding to Redondo and incentivize other local jurisdictions to create similar homeless courts across the state. The Los County Board of Supervisors passed a motion unanimously supporting this bill (see attached).

Redondo Beach also partnered with the County to receive \$7.3 million to acquire and rehabilitate a 21-unit former hotel to provide permanent supportive housing to chronically homeless households in Redondo Beach. The project will partner with several service providers to provide supportive services such as intensive case management.

The Enhanced Response to Homelessness Program continues to find ways to address the issues of homelessness in Redondo Beach. Currently, the city contracts with the Department of Mental Health Mental Evaluation Team (MET) that is shared with three other beach cities. The MET Team only responds for crisis intervention and conducts 5150 evaluations as needed and does not conduct outreach or follow up services. This contract is not effective in providing needed mental health support and treatment. The City employed Homeless Housing Navigator has proven to be effective in assisting people experiencing homelessness as well as responding to resident reports as discussed above. The staff recommends the City employ a Mental Health Clinician who can similarly assist those that need mental health treatment and medication, being more available and responsive to the City needs and resident reports.

In addition, staff recommends the development of an Education Campaign so that concerned residents know that they can make donations to the Quality of Life Account, that the Mayor and City Council established at the April 19, 2022 City Council Meeting. These donations will be used to help people they on the streets in a constructive way, and not inadvertently perpetuate destructive behaviors that will lead to continued homelessness. If someone sees a person experiencing homelessness, that person could provide a description to the City and any donation could be put towards helping the person experiencing homelessness. If the person experiencing homelessness refuses the help or cannot be located, the donation will be used for another individual experiencing homelessness.

Lastly, staff recommends hiring a part-time resident aid to oversee the bridge housing tenants as well as to locate additional transitional housing in Service Planning Area 8. Having the part-time resident aid to oversee the bridge housing in the evenings will allow us to consider more single room occupancy apartments in SPA 8 for use as bridge housing.

The City's cooperation with Los Angeles County in this effort has been strong ever since the idea for outdoor Homeless Court was proposed by us. Multiple different County Departments attend and support the efforts of Homeless Courts every month. The Pallet Shelters would not exist and the people that have been helped would still be living on the streets of Redondo without our partnership with the County. Supervisor Janice Hahn has been incredibly supportive throughout this effort. Our new Supervisor Holly Mitchell had several of her staff members visit both Homeless Court and the Pallet Shelter last month. The pictures included in this administrative report were taken during those

visits. Supervisor Mitchell's staff were effusive in their praise and indicated steadfast support for these programs as long as they are needed. We will be working with them on continued funding in the months ahead.

Where the cooperation with the County has been insufficient has been largely in the dispersal of Measure H funds. However, just last week the Board of Supervisors approved the seven recommendations of the County's Blue-Ribbon Commission on Homelessness (BRCH). These recommendations included establishing a local solutions fund and identifying ongoing multiyear funds earmarked for local solutions for jurisdictions that will make a commitment to provide in-kind or matching contributions for the development of service programs, housing or to share data. Having served as Co-Chair of the BRCH, Councilmember Horvath will best be able to explain how this will improve cooperation with the County at the local level.

COORDINATION

The City's response to homelessness is a comprehensive, synchronized effort primarily by the City Attorney's Office, Police Department and Community Services Department, in coordination with the City Manager's office.

FISCAL IMPACT

The Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Budget includes funding for the Enhanced Response Pilot Program, which also includes grants from the SBCCOG and Los Angeles CDBG funds. We will be providing Decision Packages that would fund our recommended actions in the FY 22-23 budget. It should be noted that there is a substantial amount of unaccounted staff time dedicated to the administration of the City's homelessness programs. Staff in nearly every City Department is involved in the City's program efforts.

ATTACHMENTS

- Media Release "Board of Supervisors Support Muratsuchi Homeless Court Legislation" May 3, 2022