



CITY OF POMONA COUNCIL REPORT

January 9, 2017

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Linda Lowry, City Manager

Submitted By: Benita DeFrank, Neighborhood Services Director

Subject: Adopt a Resolution Authorizing the Implementation of the City of Pomona's 2016 Strategic Plan on Homelessness – "A Way Home: Community Solutions for Pomona's Homeless".

SUMMARY

Recommendation – It is recommended that the City Council adopt a resolution authorizing the implementation of the City of Pomona's 2016 strategic plan on homelessness – "A Way Home: Community Solutions for Pomona's Homeless".

Fiscal Impact – Adoption of the strategic plan by City Council will have no fiscal impact. Any action that requires funding within the plan, which is not currently in the Operating Budget, will be brought back for Council approval.

Previously Related Action – On November 18, 2013, the City Council received a report on the "State of Homelessness" and provided direction based on staff recommendations. On February 8, 2016, City Council directed staff to provide an updated strategic plan addressing homelessness within the City. On November 21, 2016, the City Council directed staff to bring the reviewed strategic plan on homelessness back for adoption.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Pomona strategic plan on homelessness, "A Way Home: Community Solutions for Pomona's Homeless" was drafted utilizing recommendations provided by the Homeless Advisory Committee. This ad hoc committee met over a nine month period, from November 2015 to July 2016, with a focus on four areas of concern identified at the Community Summit on Homelessness held in August 2015. These four areas of focus are: 1) Insufficient Housing and Shelters; 2) the Provision of Programs, Services and Resources; 3) Community Perceptions; and 4) City Policies. The plan contains four goals, thirty strategies and over 200 activities that provide solutions in each of these areas and if adopted, will provide a path to reduce the number of unsheltered persons currently living on the streets and address the negative impact of homelessness on the residents, neighborhoods, businesses and public places of Pomona.

BACKGROUND

On November 21, 2016, the City Council discussed the 2016 strategic plan on homelessness and with minor revisions, directed staff to bring the plan back for Council to adopt it for implementation purposes.

DISCUSSION

In November 2015, the Homeless Advisory Committee (HAC) was formed to create a forum to continue the discussion on homelessness, following the community summit that was held on the subject in August 2015. Close to 40 people attended the first HAC meeting representing local elected officials, both public and private agencies, community and faith based organizations and community members. These committee members formed working groups that reflected the areas of concern identified at the summit: 1) Housing and Facilities, 2) Programs, Services and Resources, 3) Community Perceptions and Public Relations, and, 4) City Policy (ordinances, legal issues and enforcement). This ad hoc committee met for monthly for 9 months and hosted over 75 people during that time. In July 2016, the four working groups of the HAC provided the City with a set of goals and strategies to address each area of concern. These goals and strategies were then expanded to create the structure of the strategic plan. In addition in 2016, there were three community meetings, hosted in three different council districts, which focused on residents' concerns regarding homelessness. Those concerns were also considered in the strategic plan development. The strategic plan as presented is ambitious, but it is also achievable, and if implemented should reduce the number of unsheltered homeless persons in Pomona significantly.

The Strategic Plan

“A Way Home: Community Solutions for Pomona’s Homeless” is a strategic plan that addresses homelessness by focusing on two areas of concern: the number of unsheltered persons currently living on the streets in Pomona and the negative impact and residual effects that homelessness has on the residents, neighborhoods, businesses and public places of Pomona. The plan does this through four specific goals that are supported by thirty strategies and over 200 implementing activities. The four goals of the plan are to:

Goal A	Reduce the Number of Pomona’s Unsheltered Homeless
Goal B	Reduce the Negative Impacts on Community Neighborhoods and Public Spaces through the Coordination of Services
Goal C	Have an Engaged and Informed Community Regarding Homelessness and Homeless Solutions
Goal D	Balance the Needs and Rights of Homeless Persons and the Larger Community through Updated Fair, Legal and Enforceable Policies and Ordinances

Guiding Principles

The plan was also developed with four guiding principles, principles that encompassed broader philosophies that were followed with the whole Pomona community in mind. These included:

1. **Homelessness is a crisis in Pomona.** Our neighbors who are without homes need housing. We are a compassionate and caring community that wants to take action to assist those living outside and in unstable housing. To accomplish this, under Pomona's Promise, the City has adopted a collective impact approach to ending homelessness. This means that all goals, strategies and potential funding sources must align towards shared outcomes. The partners of the plan include residents, the housed and unhoused, alongside the faith, business, government, philanthropic, and non-profit sectors. The plan can only be achieved if all partners work collectively, across sectors and across community, region and county, to end homelessness.
2. **Make homelessness brief and one-time.** To accomplish this people who are homeless must access housing stability quickly. This is the responsibility of funders of homeless housing and services, along with nonprofit and faith-based providers. Implementing more effective, efficient, "Housing First" program models will allow us to serve more people.
3. **Homelessness is solvable.** While the crises that impact housing stability will never be fully prevented, we can end a person's homelessness very quickly. Other cities are making significant progress, and Pomona could learn from them by adapting to new proven strategies and ideas. To make greater strides, the City must commit fully to using the most effective, proven approaches to support people experiencing homelessness to quickly gain housing stability and employment, prioritizing those Pomona residents who are most vulnerable.
4. **Addressing our Fair Share.** Finally, we must commit to providing housing and services to the homeless of Pomona, just as our surrounding city, region and county partners must commit to providing needed housing and services to their fair share of their unhoused community members. Each community needs to commit resources of housing and services equal to their homeless count and community need. If each city addressed the issue of supplying at least housing options for the unsheltered in their homeless count, we could reduce homelessness significantly across the region.

Strategic Plan Priorities

The plan provides priorities and timeframes to implement each strategy. Each strategy has been given either an urgent, high, medium or low priority with timeframes that span from one month to five years. Within the plan there are five areas of urgency.

Open a Transitional Storage Center: Providing a place where the unsheltered homeless can store their belongings, including clothing, blankets, medications, important papers and vital records, is a needed service when addressing the effects of the unsheltered homeless. It is also a reasonable response for a community impacted by the belongings of the homeless stored in bushes, parks, alleys and on sidewalks.

Develop a year-round, 24-hour shelter: Developing one or more shelters, suitable for the various subpopulations of Pomona's unsheltered homeless, will provide a place for people to sleep at night as an alternative to living in parks, streets and alleys.

Develop a Centralized Service Center and Communal Kitchen: A designated space, that is properly designed and managed, will provide a place for Pomona's homeless to obtain the food and services they need as they find their way home, while providing a centralized location for those who wish to assist the homeless. This centralized delivery of services and food will reduce the impact of such activities on Pomona's public spaces, businesses, and neighborhoods.

Create Policies that Support the Strategies: A discussion of policy matters took place in each of the HAC Working Groups. The general feeling was that it does the community no good to have policies in place that can't be enforced regardless of the reason. As storage units and shelters are opened, and needed services and food distribution are centralized, a number of policies can be either enforced or created to alleviate the negative communal impact that the effects of homelessness currently pose on the Pomona community.

Each of the goals, strategies, and activities found in "A Way Home" are proposed to reduce the impacts of homelessness throughout Pomona. Whether it is an individual or family experiencing homelessness, the person who wants to volunteer to help those in need, or the family that is looking to use a park and feel safe, "A Way Home" provides a call to action with goals that are achievable and sound data-based strategies to succeed.

Council Direction Incorporated into the Plan

On November 21, 2016, City Council directed staff to bring the 2016 Strategic Plan on Homelessness back for adoption. They also provided direction regarding two areas of the plan: 1) That Strategy B5 - Advocate for Fair-Share Participation with Neighboring Cities, include within its activities a direct mention of members of Pomona City Council meeting with their regional counterparts to discuss fair share strategies regarding addressing homelessness; and 2) That any city-sponsored emergency shelter prioritize serving Pomona's homeless.

The plan has been revised to incorporate City Council direction. Activity B.5.6. has been changed to include the Mayor and members of City Council (pg. 32) and Strategy D1 now includes a "City-Sponsored Shelter" paragraph that ensures that City resources are allocated to specifically address Pomona's homeless population (pg. 11), using the Pomona Residency Criterion for Homeless Services, as described in Strategy D1 (pg.72). Those not meeting the criteria will be directed to LA County's Coordinated Entry System, other county resources or to resources found in their city of prior residency

Finally, public comment was received to include a list of all members of the Pomona Continuum of Care and to include a list of the FY 2016-17 City of Pomona homeless program allocations as awarded. These lists have been added as part of the document Addenda.