



Council Agenda Report

Item 7b

Department: Community Development
Cost Center: 4006
For Agenda of: 3/21/2023
Placement: Public Hearing
Estimated Time: 20 minutes

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SUBJECT: ADOPTION OF THE HOMELESSNESS RESPONSE STRATEGIC PLAN

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Draft Resolution entitled, "A Resolution of the City Council of the City of San Luis Obispo, California, approving the Homelessness Response Strategic Plan."

POLICY CONTEXT

The [6th Cycle General Plan Housing Element](#) includes policies and programs that relate to the reduction of homelessness; specific goals and policies are listed below:

Goal 1: Safety – Provide safe, decent shelter for all residents.

Policy 1.1: Assist those citizens unable to obtain safe shelter on their own.

Policy 1.2: Support and inform the public about fair housing laws and programs that allow equal housing access for all City residents.

Program 1.7: Continue to support local and regional solutions to homelessness by funding supportive programs, services, and housing solutions.

Goal 8: Special Housing Needs – Encourage the creation and maintenance of housing for those with special housing needs.

Policy 8.1: Encourage housing development that meets a variety of special needs, including large families, single parents, disabled persons, the elderly, students, veterans, farmworkers, the homeless, or those seeking congregate care, group housing, single-room occupancy, or cohousing accommodations, utilizing universal design.

Policy 8.8: Continue to support regional efforts to address homelessness.

Policy 8.10: Assist the homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless by supporting shelters, temporary housing, and transitional housing.

Program 8.11: Continue to provide resources that support local and regional solutions to meet the needs of the homeless and continue to support, jointly with other agencies, shelters and programs, such as Housing First and Rapid Rehousing, for the homeless and for displaced individuals and families.

Program 8.19: Continue to look for partnership opportunities with non-profit housing developers and service providers to acquire four vacant, blighted, or underutilized properties (land, retail or commercial space, motels, apartments, housing units, mobile home parks) during the planning period for conversion into affordable permanent and supportive housing for homeless persons and families.

Program 8.21: Continue to coordinate monthly with the County Department of Social Services, Homeless Services Oversight Council (HSOC), social service providers, and non-profit organizations to identify, evaluate, and implement strategies to reduce the impacts of homelessness on the city.

DISCUSSION

Background

In accordance with the City Council adopted [2021-2023 Major City Goal for Housing and Homelessness](#), City staff has worked over the last two years to create and implement strategies and best practices in alignment with the Countywide Plan to Address Homelessness, and develop the City's first Strategic Plan for Homelessness Response (Attachment B).

The work associated with the Major City Goal is organized and coordinated under the broad goal statement to, *'Collaborate with local non-profit partners and the county, the state, and federal governments to discover and implement comprehensive and effective strategies to reduce chronic homelessness.'*

Strategic Plan Framework

Four key factors influenced the development of the City's Homelessness Response Strategic Plan: Major City Goals and previous Council direction, alignment with the Countywide Plan, lessons learned from implementing strategies to date, and feedback gained through public engagement. The Homelessness Response Strategic Plan is built around five key components: Regional Collaboration and Engagement; Communications; Data; Pilot Programs; and Funding Opportunities.

Alignment with Countywide Plan

The City's two-year strategic plan is intended to align with and promote [the San Luis Obispo Countywide Plan to Address Homelessness 2022-2027](#). The County is responsible for implementing programs set forth by the State including Social Services, Behavioral Health, Drug & Alcohol Services, and Public Health. The County is also responsible for setting the overall tone and strategic direction on addressing key issues that affect homelessness in the region. Upon adoption of the Countywide Plan, the County emphasized itself as the leader of countywide homelessness response. As such, the City's Homelessness Response Strategic Plan focuses on aligning with and promoting County initiatives.

Strategy Implementation

Implementation of strategies to date provided valuable direction for the development of the Homelessness Response Strategic Plan. The key tasks included in the strategic plan framework reflect ongoing implementation of strategies as well as new initiatives to prevent and address homelessness. The plan period is 2022-2024, with the first year well underway, and the plan is intended to be updated in the middle of the City's two-year financial planning cycle in advance of goal setting and budget preparation for the 2025-27 Financial Plan. The timeframe also allows frequent updates to leverage state and regional funding opportunities and to ensure alignment with the Five-Year Countywide Plan to Address Homelessness.

Previous Council or Advisory Body Action

On [November 16, 2021](#), Council received a presentation from the Homelessness Response Manager on their activities to date and provided direction on developing a strategic plan with a continuous implementation methodology and five key components (1. Data, 2. Communications, 3. Pilot Programs, 4. Regional Collaboration and Engagement and 5. Funding Opportunities).

On [June 21, 2022](#), Council received a presentation from County staff on Homelessness Response Regional Collaboration and provided feedback on the draft Countywide Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness.

On [September 20, 2022](#), Council held a study session to review the strategic vision, proposed outcomes, and outreach plan for the City's Homelessness Response Strategic Plan. Council feedback from that study session informed the implementation of key stakeholder feedback sessions and the creation of the proposed strategic plan framework, in alignment with the Countywide Plan.

On [February 7, 2023](#), Council held a second study session to review the Homelessness Response Strategic Plan Framework. Council feedback from that study session informed the final version of the Strategic Plan as shown in Attachment B.

Public Engagement

Homelessness is an issue that touches every part of the community from personal wellbeing to public safety and environmental impact. As such, community feedback has been a vital component in shaping the City's Strategic Plan.

As directed by Council at the September 20, 2022 City Council meeting, City staff facilitated strategic stakeholder engagement activities including key stakeholder feedback sessions, an online community survey, and individual surveys with unsheltered and unhoused individuals to incorporate their lived experience and valuable insight into the strategic plan. The strategic plan includes list individual groups and organizations that provided specific input on the strategic plan. A summary of the public engagement data is included in Homelessness Response Strategic Plan as shown in Attachment B.

CONCURRENCE

The City has established an internal communications structure that relies on three key groups: 1) Field Operations, 2) Technical Specialist Group, and 3) Steering Committee to streamline communications and establish concurrence on City policies and procedures that directly impact those experiencing homelessness. All policies and procedures are vetted by the Steering Committee, which is comprised of leadership from City Administration, City Attorney's Office, Community Development Department, Police Department, Fire Department, Public Works, and Parks and Recreation.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) does not apply to the recommended actions in this report because the actions do not constitute a "Project" under CEQA Guidelines Section 15378. Once the Homelessness Response Strategic Plan is adopted, implementation of the plan will be evaluated on a project-by-project basis to determine if any of its components require environmental review under CEQA prior to implementation.

FISCAL IMPACT

Budgeted: Yes

Budget Year: 2022-23

Funding Identified: Yes

Fiscal Analysis:

Funding Sources	Total Budget Available	Current Funding Request	Remaining Balance	Annual Ongoing Cost
General Fund	\$26,400	\$0	\$26,400	\$
State				
Federal				
Fees				
Other:				
Total	\$26,400	\$0	\$26,400	\$

Initial funds in the amount of \$35,000 were allocated in the 2021-23 Financial Plan for stakeholder engagement and community outreach activities, design and development of materials such as the pocket guide, and the strategic plan design. Due to the delay of plan development necessary to align with the Countywide Plan, \$35,000 was carried over and \$8,600 was approved in October 2022 for stakeholder engagement. Remaining funds in the amount of \$26,400 have been allocated for the design, production and implementation of the strategic plan. After strategic plan design funds are expended, \$11,400 will be available for implementation.

ALTERNATIVES

1. ***Council could decide not to adopt the resolution approving the Homelessness Response Strategic Plan.*** Staff does not recommend this alternative due to delays in plan implementation.
2. ***Council could decide to continue the item.*** If the City Council does not have sufficient information to provide direction to staff, or if additional time is needed for discussion, the Council can continue consideration of the item to a future meeting. If the City Council decides to continue the meeting, direction should be provided to staff on any additional information needed to complete the discussion.

ATTACHMENTS

- A - Draft Resolution adopting the Homelessness Response Strategic Plan
- B - Homelessness Response Strategic Plan