



August 10, 2017

Jim Mellander, Foreperson
Contra Costa County Civil Grand Jury
P.O. Box 431
Martinez, CA 94553

Dear Jim Mellander,

This letter is in response to the questions asked in Grand Jury Report No. 1707, "Homeless in the Cities", released on June 9, 2017. In accordance with Section 933.05, of the California Penal Code, the City provides the attached required responses to Findings 1-10 and Recommendations 1-4 as identified in the Grand Jury Report.

Please feel free to contact me at (925) 809-7710 should you need any additional information.

Thomas Hansen
Acting Police Chief
City of Brentwood

cc: Honorable Mayor and City Council of the City of Brentwood
Gustavo "Gus" Vina, City Manager
Damien Brower, City Attorney

**City Of Brentwood Response to Grand Jury Findings and Recommendations
Grand Jury Report No. 1707, "Homelessness in the Cities."**

FINDINGS

Grand Jury Finding F1

CORE teams are most likely to be the first point of entry for the homeless into the County's Coordinated Entry System.

City Response: The City of Brentwood ("City") partially disagrees with the finding. The City does not have a formal CORE team, and cannot speak to the findings of those agencies that do. The City of Brentwood Police Department does, however, have a Homeless Liaison Officer who works closely with the homeless population and a City staff team responsible for homeless issues.

The Homeless Liaison Officer has helped facilitate the entry of homeless individuals into the Contra Costa County Coordinated Entry System. The staff team, comprised of employees from various departments within the City meets on a regular basis to address issues related specifically to homeless individuals located within the City. Members of this team communicate and work collaboratively with each other and with surrounding agencies and members of other County based groups or programs tasked with addressing homeless issues.

Grand Jury Finding F2

CORE teams can successfully identify a homeless individual in need of physical or mental health services.

City Response: The City partially disagrees with the finding. The City does not have a formal CORE team and is not aware of the knowledge, skills, training, or ability level of each individual member assigned to another agencies' CORE team, as they relate to successfully identifying the needs of homeless persons.

The City's Police Department's Homeless Liaison Officer has, however, worked collaboratively with individual members of the County's CORE program to provide physical and/or mental health services to members of the homeless population within the City. Although there was nothing in these interactions that would suggest the CORE team members did not have the ability to identify the needs of homeless individuals, the City is unable to speak to the specific ability levels of the members of other agencies' CORE programs.

Grand Jury Finding F3

CORE teams have the resources to identify if there are vacant shelter beds available in the County.

City Response: The City partially disagrees with the finding because it is not aware of the specific resources that the CORE teams of other agencies possess. In the past, City staff has been able to identify if there are vacant shelter beds available in the County. This information has been accessed either through the County's CORE program, or via other resources currently available in the County.

Grand Jury Finding F4

CORE teams are equipped and have the authorization to transport homeless individuals to a medical facility or to a homeless shelter.

City Response: The City partially disagrees with the finding because it is not aware of the specific equipment, authority, and/or transportation protocols of the CORE teams of other governmental agencies. The City is, however, equipped to transport homeless individuals to a medical facility or to a homeless shelter, and has done so in the past.

Grand Jury Finding F5

CORE teams build trust between the homeless and police departments.

City Response: The City partially disagrees with the finding because it does not have first-hand knowledge of the trust levels between specific CORE teams, the homeless, and police departments of other governmental agencies.

The City does, however, take very seriously its interactions with members of the homeless population and strives to establish positive relationships with all those encountered. In spite of the best intentions and a professional and empathetic approach, City employees are sometimes unable to establish positive and/or trusting relationships with every member of the homeless community.

When City staff has worked with members of another agency's CORE program, it has been their experience that some homeless individuals will trust both CORE team members and police officers, while others will trust one but not the other, and yet others will trust neither. City staff is well trained and dedicated to the service of all members of the Brentwood community, be they homeless or otherwise; and will continue in their efforts to forge positive and trusting relationships with all those encountered.

Grand Jury Finding F9

The cities of Antioch, Concord, Pittsburg, and Walnut Creek, which are the CDBG Entitlement Cities, are the only cities in Contra Costa County that have an approved written homeless plan to end or reduce homelessness in their respective jurisdictions.

City Response: The City partially disagrees with the finding because it has no direct knowledge of the homeless plans, or lack thereof, of other cities in the County.

Grand Jury Finding F10

The City appears to be in compliance with the California Housing Accountability Act.

City Response: The City agrees with the finding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Grand Jury Recommendation R1

The City should consider establishing CORE teams either by partnering with one or more cities in the region, or by funding its own team.

City Response: The recommendation will not be implemented at this time because it does not appear to be warranted. The City's Police Department currently has a policy that addresses the treatment of homeless individuals, their needs, and their property. This policy extends much further than simple enforcement of laws, and City police officers are encouraged to utilize a variety of resources when considering long-term solutions to problems that may relate to the homeless.

The Police Department's Homeless Liaison Officer attends training and County-wide meetings regarding the trends and developments in the treatment of, and resources for, homeless individuals and families. The cooperative and collaborative relationship between the City of Brentwood Homeless Liaison Officer and members of the County's CORE program has proven to be successful to date.

Specifically, the Grand Jury Report references demographic data about the homeless population in the Point-in Time (PIT) Count published by the Contra Costa Council on Homelessness. Between 2015 and 2016, the unsheltered PIT counts for the City showed a decrease from eleven to eight homeless individuals. A review of the recently published 2017 PIT count showed a further reduction, from eight individuals to four, who were identified as unsheltered and homeless in the City. As such, the process in which the City is currently interfacing with the homeless appears to be sufficient at this time. The City will, however, continue to monitor and work with its homeless population, making adjustments to policies as the situation may warrant.

Grand Jury Recommendation R2

The City should consider providing incentives for developers to construct housing for the extremely low income, very low income, and homeless populations.

City Response: The recommendation has been implemented. The City of Brentwood currently has several programs in place that act as incentives for the provision of affordable housing. These incentive programs include, but are not limited to, the following:

- An Affordable Housing Ordinance that currently requires developments of 25 or more lots or dwelling units, to either construct or pay an in-lieu fee for two percent of the total number of dwelling units. This is generally allocated at 1% for very low and 1% for low income housing.
- A Density Bonus Ordinance that allows for increased density for developments that provide 5% of total units for very low or extremely low income; 10% of total units for low and moderate income, or for senior housing projects.
- A standardized and streamlined planning permit application process that provides priority building inspections, as well as water and sewer priority, for affordable housing projects.

- The City works with developers to provide fee deferrals for affordable housing projects.

Grand Jury Recommendation R3

The City should consider successor Agency funds, CDBG and other federal housing funds, impact fees, and city general funds to assist in funding housing for extremely low income, very low income, and homeless populations.

City Response: The recommendation has been implemented, and further efforts to act in accordance with the recommendations will take place as funds become available.

Although the City does not administer its own CDBG funds, it is part of the County's Consortium. The City will consider bidding for CDBG funds through the County's annual process as such funds may be needed for planned affordable housing projects. In addition, the City encourages non-profits and affordable housing developers who consider building affordable housing units in Brentwood to apply for CDBG funds.

The City's Affordable Housing Program offers down payment assistance to very low and low income first-time home buyers. Further, approximately \$6.4 million of the City's affordable housing funds has been used to provide funding to non-profit and affordable housing developers for the following projects:

- Brentwood Senior Commons – 80 units/apartments (very low and low income seniors)
- Villa Amador – 96 units/apartments (farm workers, extremely low, and low multi-family)
- Grove at Sunset – 54 units/apartments (very low and low income multi-family)

In addition, the City may help fund other affordable housing projects as funds become available through the collection of in-lieu fees.

Finally, the City's Successor Agency currently has no funding available for future affordable housing projects.

Grand Jury Recommendation R4

The City should consider adopting a five-year comprehensive homeless plan as soon as possible with a target date of January 1, 2019, to reduce the homeless population in the City.

City Response: Although the Report does not provide a definition for what the Grand Jury considers to be a "comprehensive homeless plan", the City of Brentwood has established policies and practices that were developed and implemented with the intent to address the needs and lawful treatment of the homeless.

Along with the actions and programs identified in Responses 3 and 4 above, a team comprised of employees from various departments within the City of Brentwood meets on a regular basis to address issues related specifically to homeless individuals located within the City. Members of this team communicate and work collaboratively with each other and with surrounding agencies and members of other County based groups or programs tasked with addressing issues related to the homeless.

In addition, training is provided to City employees to assist them in understanding current legal and social issues related to the homeless. Although a formalized “five-year comprehensive homeless plan” has not been drafted, the procedures currently followed have helped to serve as a guide for the City in dealing with issues impacting the homeless. The above described efforts have, thus far proven to be successful. As stated above, there has been a steady reduction in the number of homeless individuals within the City with the PIT count going from 11 to 8 to 4 between 2015 and 2017. These reductions and the current estimated homeless population suggest that a more formal “five-year comprehensive plan,” is not warranted at this time.

