



September 19, 2017

Jim Mellander, Foreperson
2016-2017 Contra Costa County Grand Jury
725 Court Street
P.O. Box 431
Martinez, CA 94553-0091

RE: City of Richmond's Response to Grand Jury Report 1707: "Homelessness in the Cities"

Dear Foreperson Mellander:

In accordance with California Penal Code Sections 933.05(a) and 933.05(b), please find below the City of Richmond's responses to the findings and recommendations of the Grand Jury. The City's response is in italics directly below each finding or recommendation.

FINDINGS

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

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.

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

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.

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

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.

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

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.

5. CORE teams build trust between the homeless and police departments.

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.

9. 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.

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.

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

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Response: The recommendation requires further analysis. The City of Richmond recently established the Taskforce on Homelessness (“Taskforce”) with the goal of identifying current issues impacting Richmond’s homeless population and making policy and program recommendations to the City Council, City staff and other stakeholders. The Taskforce met for the first time in June 2017 and plans to meet monthly until May 2018 after which time a determination will be made regarding next steps.

Currently, the Taskforce includes 25 - 30 individuals consisting of community members, non-profit service providers, housing providers, developers, those experiencing homelessness, code enforcement and abatement, county staff, police and the MHET (Mental Health Engagement Team), Contra Costa County Homeless Services, the faith community, and others.

Before the end of 2017, the Taskforce could discuss the feasibility of establishing CORE teams either by partnering with one or more cities in the region or by funding its own team. The item can also be placed on an upcoming West County Mayor’s meeting agenda to discuss a regional approach.

The City of Richmond’s Police Department currently conducts the following activities:

- *Maintains an updated inventory of all known homeless encampments*
- *Coordinates with the Mental Health Engagement Team (MHET)*
- *Coordinates with the County mobile homeless outreach team (CORE) to provide support services and wrap around support to individuals who are impacted by homelessness. Services provided include basic needs,*

shelter placement, health and dental appointments and other supportive work.

- *Designates a collateral assignment police officer to service homeless encampments and provide coordinated resources.*

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

Response: The recommendation has been implemented. In November 2016, the City Council adopted a revised density bonus ordinance (R.M.C. Section 15.04.602) as part of its Comprehensive Zoning Update, which removed the cap on the number of concessions/incentives and maximum density bonus a developer could request and the could City grant.

3. The City should consider using 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.

Response: The recommendation has been implemented. For example, the City has utilized Successor Agency funds for projects such as Miraflores Senior Housing which included a combination of housing for low and very low income senior residents. The City also obtained federal Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) conversion funds for projects such as Friendship Manor and Triangle Court. The City will continue to seek and identify funding from the various sources listed above to help fund housing for extremely low income, very low income, and homeless populations.

4. 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.

Response: The recommendation requires further analysis. The Taskforce is currently scheduled to meet monthly until May 2018, and therefore, before the end of 2017, a request can be made to discuss the concept of developing a five-year comprehensive homeless plan. This recommendation can be made to City Council for possible implementation and adoption by January 1, 2019.

The Richmond City Council reviewed and approved this response at their meeting of September 19, 2017.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond on this very important issue. Please contact me at (510) 620-6512 or at bill_lindsay@ci.richmond.ca.us if you have any additional questions.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Lindsay', with a stylized flourish at the end.

William A. Lindsay
City Manager

cc: Tom Butt, Mayor
Chief Allwyn Brown, Police Chief
Bruce Reed Goodmiller, City Attorney
Richard Mitchell, Director of Planning and Building Services