



SAN RAFAEL CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

Department: City Manager

**Prepared by: Marc Sabin,
Homeless Program Manager**

City Manager Approval: _____

TOPIC: HOMELESSNESS UPDATE

SUBJECT: INFORMATIONAL REPORT ON STATUS OF HOMELESSNESS IN SAN RAFAEL

RECOMMENDATION:

Accept informational report and provide direction and/or comment to staff.

BACKGROUND:

The homelessness updates that were presented to the City Council on [June 7, 2021](#) and [December 6, 2021](#) serve as a comprehensive background to this informational update. In particular, readers of this staff report that would like a more comprehensive background and understanding of the City's efforts regarding homelessness over the past several years should direct their attention to the June 7, 2021 staff report.

While it is not possible to capture the breadth and depth of the June 7, 2021 staff report in a small number of bullet points, the following are a few key dates to demonstrate some highlights of the past five years:

- Spring 2016: Marin Homeless Outreach Team (HOT Program) launched - develops customized housing strategies across service providers for each person experiencing homelessness.
- Mid-2017: Coordinated Entry System launched – moves customized strategy approach to a Countywide program. Uses objective measurements of vulnerability to determine housing prioritization.
- Mid-2017: Marin Housing Authority pledges annual slots of Section 8 vouchers for referrals from Coordinated Entry. State releases new funding for “Whole Person Care” to provide resources to high utilizers of the healthcare system. “Housing First” is launched at scale, which is the underlying approach for Marin County’s system of care - including housing and case management. In Marin County, the primary provider of case

FOR CITY CLERK ONLY

Council Meeting:

Disposition:

management is through the Marin County Department of Health and Human Services and the Marin Housing Authority is the key player in providing housing.

- 2017-present: As of May 2022, the Coordinated Entry system has housed 488 people who had been experiencing chronic homelessness.
- 2018-2022: Community Homeless Fund (CHF) supported by all Marin jurisdictions. Conversations are on-going regarding the use of the CHF for the next three years with those jurisdictions that wish to participate.
- Fall 2020: City of San Rafael allocates \$1.54M towards Marin's first Project Homekey site at 3301 Kerner Boulevard.
- Fall 2020: City of San Rafael allocates \$750,000 towards Mill Street 2.0 permanent supportive housing and shelter site.
- Summer 2021: Case Management regional expansion - City of San Rafael contributes \$260,000 for case management services.
- Summer 2021: Service Support Area (SSA) opens to focus supportive services to the encampment.
- February 2022: City of San Rafael increases its funding of the Mill Street 2.0 permanent supportive housing and shelter site by \$350,000 for a total of \$1,100,000.
- March 2022: The State's Project RoomKey program ends
- April 2022: City of San Rafael Awarded Encampment Resolution Funding (ERF) by the State of California (\$522,619)
- May 2022: Marin County convened a Homelessness Summit for all Marin's jurisdictions and partner agencies – the focus was on the Housing First model
- June 2022- City Council approves ERF Funding services to be provided by St. Vincent de Paul Society of Marin County

Prior to the pandemic, there had been a decrease in homelessness in Marin County. Between 2017 and 2019, overall homelessness in Marin had fallen by 7%, long term chronic homelessness had declined by 28% and unsheltered homelessness in San Rafael had dropped by 30%. However, numbers since the pandemic are growing. In February 2022, Marin County conducted its Point in Time Count. Preliminary reports indicate that there has been an 8.4% increase in overall homelessness, 10.5% increase in chronic homelessness, 35.2% increase in family homelessness, and a 34.3% decrease in veteran homelessness. About 74% of the people experiencing homelessness in Marin County are unsheltered.

This informational report will outline what has transpired since the December 2021 report and will provide applicable updates to the specific elements included in that report.

ANALYSIS:

The below is a brief update on each of the three-tracks recommended in the June 7, 2021, report (also included in the December 9, 2022 report).

“Track 1 – Immediate. Facilitate using Project Roomkey and Project Homekey existing beds to house people and match them with case management.”

The shelter at 3301 Kerner Boulevard continues to operate as a shelter as Homeward Bound's new project on Mill Street continues to be under construction. The “Mill Street 2.0” project,

which was partially funded through the City of San Rafael’s Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF), is nearing the completion of construction and will include 32 permanent supportive housing units in addition to 44 shelter beds. Once Homeward Bound moves into the Mill Street site, the 3301 Kerner Boulevard site will undergo improvements to create 44 permanent supportive housing units. This project is being developed by Eden Housing. Partial funding for the 3301 Kerner Boulevard site was also funded through the City of San Rafael’s AHTF. The City of San Rafael has allocated approximately \$2 million to this permanent supportive housing project.

Regarding Project Roomkey, as mentioned in the June and December 2021 staff reports, there were 40 hotel room beds through Project Roomkey in San Rafael that the County of Marin was funding (and receiving reimbursement through the State for the room cost) that were being operated by Catholic Charities. The Project Roomkey program came to an end this spring.

The [Casa Buena](#) site in Corte Madera adds another 18 units of permanent supportive housing for individuals experiencing homelessness. As an illustration, the following is a table showing recent and upcoming new permanent supportive housing units.

Site	Type	New Units
3301 Kerner Boulevard – San Rafael	Project Homekey/City’s AHTF	44
Casa Buena – Corte Madera	Project Homekey	18
S. Eliseo Drive – Larkspur	Project Homekey	43
Mill Street 2.0 – San Rafael	City’s AHTF	32

[Marin County shows](#) the total supply of permanent supportive housing at 649 units. There was a 10% increase in permanent supportive housing units between 2020 and 2021.

“Track 2 – Leverage one-time stimulus monies to supercharge our existing Coordinated Entry system while also mitigating current health and safety concerns (beginning June 2021, subject to ability to hire and operationalize case management capacity)”

Staff’s recommendation on this Track was implemented by the San Rafael City Council through the [allocation of \\$260,000](#) to support an increased program of housing-first case management regionally in Marin County. Each of the Marin cities and towns decided to join in this regional effort to support additional case management in Marin.

This case management will allow local cities and towns to continue to support high-needs, chronically homeless individuals with transitioning into permanent housing. At the same time, it is also critical for the City to continue to address the immediate health and safety concerns among people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. This case management work is already underway, and many individuals experiencing homelessness who have been resistant to case management and unhoused for decades, are finally finding the stability they need to engage on the next step towards getting housed.

As a second component to Track 2, staff recommended possible code amendments to restrict encampments in certain high fire risk areas and critical use facilities to address public health

and safety hazards. The San Rafael City Council subsequently [approved such code amendments](#) as a part of the July 6, 2021 City Council meeting.

Also, as a part of staff's Track 2 recommendation, staff suggested a program to "create a designated area for people experiencing homelessness where they can have access to clean camping facilities, restrooms, and storage." This recommendation subsequently turned into the Service Support Area (SSA) in early July 2021, which is intended as a temporary solution to assist individuals experiencing homelessness. In the months leading up to July 2021, there were extensive encampments under Highway 101 in downtown San Rafael on Caltrans owned property. The City worked with Caltrans to relocate the encampments to the block between Fifth and Mission Avenues, so that it can be an area of focused, supportive services.

The SSA is a collaborative approach with involvement from many local service providers who have a focus on homelessness. It creates a central, designated place for our community partners to provide services. Services vary and are provided weekly or multiple times per week. Examples of partners providing services include: the Downtown Streets Team, Ritter Center, Marin County Health and Human Services, Marin Humane Society, the CARE team, the Spahr Center, the Salvation Army, and members of the Marin Street Chaplaincy. Service providers have remarked to staff that the SSA allows them to reach more people and make greater impacts than if encampments were spread out over many locations.

As part of the collaboration with Caltrans, the County of Marin, CHP, and multiple service organizations, the SSA located between Fifth and Mission in downtown San Rafael provides:

- Full time security, 24x7
- Tents, cots, and sleeping bags
- Three restrooms with on-going maintenance
- Handwashing stations
- Electrical outlets and phone charging stations
- Garbage pick-up three times weekly
- Regular outreach
- Service referrals
- Dedicated meeting space to meet with case managers/social workers
- Weekly showers through Downtown Streets Team
- Other quality of life amenities

In addition to the above list, the service provider community also provided services such as mobile medical health, animal care, Covid-19 testing and vaccination, legal service, and Behavioral Health and Recovery Services. The SSA also provided dedicated office space for the many providers who came on site. This office space created a dignified location for SSA residents to talk about the services they needed in a manner that afforded them privacy.

The City and Caltrans had collectively agreed from the beginning that the SSA would be temporary (6-12 months). It has now been in place for 12 months. With the number of individuals declining within the SSA, and the addition of funding being increased for support services, the SSA is planned to wind down in August 2022. The individuals that are currently

residing in the space have been given a case manager who will provide them support to help transition to permanent housing. At any given time, approximately 23 SSA residents had an assigned case manager. Over the past 12 months, approximately 35 individuals who utilized the SSA had a case manager. The success of the program has helped house 21 individuals and cultivated important relationships that will provide supportive services for years to come.

The City of San Rafael roughly estimates that 15-20 individuals will still require ongoing services post-SSA. The City is working with Saint Vincent de Paul through the Encampment Resolution funding to ensure all individuals connected to the SSA remain or become closely linked to services and case management once the SSA winds down. Additionally, the City plans to continue other established resources such as mobile showers, restrooms, mental health liaison services, outreach services, etc.

In December 2021, the State of California released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a program entitled Encampment Resolution Funding (ERF). The City applied for these funds and received notification at the beginning of April 2022 that it was awarded \$522,619. The services which this funding provides are two full time case managers- one of which will focus on creating stronger links to Behavioral Health and Recovery services. The ERF services were initiated on June 21, 2022 and will sunset on June 30, 2024.

It is important to note that Saint Vincent de Paul will work with the individuals while the SSA is still in operation and will maintain an intensive case management approach with individuals post-SSA. This is the critical function of the ERF services. Saint Vincent de Paul case managers will strive to maintain connections with individuals to develop a path to housing.

As a side note, the City has also participated in the regional Community Homeless Fund (CHF), which has been supported in the past by all cities and towns in Marin at a total of \$180,000 per year for the past several years. Over the past few years, this fund has focused on providing mobile showers at various locations in Marin County, including at Homeward Bound's temporary site at 3301 Kerner Boulevard and at the SSA. The City led a Request for Proposals (RFP process) for the next round of the CHF with a focus on outreach, rapid response, case management, and showers. The City received two proposals that primarily focused on showers. City staff is now working with the two applicants to further explore the proposals. The CHF will continue but likely with just the participation from Marin cities and towns with a desire for mobile showers, including the County of Marin.

While "Housing First" and the creation of permanent supportive housing is the primary goal shared by most involved entities in Marin, it can be a long process. Recognizing that, the City is interested in exploring further partnerships in the area of "Interim Housing" that would be a bridge between tent encampments and permanent supportive housing. Some examples have included temporary one room, single occupancy structures built in a village setting.

The City has reached out to the County to explore the idea of a Request for Information (RFI) modeled after the [County's approach](#) to seek Project Homekey interested parties and sites. This RFI would seek community partners, which could be private or public land owners and the faith-based community, who are interested in the Interim Housing model.

These units, common in other counties in California, can be stood up and in operation often in less than six months. Interim Housing is not presented as the solution to homelessness, but rather part of the continuum of services which mitigates individuals from having to remain unsheltered while waiting on permanent housing stock to increase. The approximate cost for an Interim Housing unit-including development of land, construction, office space and bathroom facilities are approximately \$30,000-\$40,000 per door.

Additionally, the City and County staff are discussing additional encampment strategies that will help San Rafael and other jurisdictions assist people get from encampments to permanent housing.

“Track 3 – Leverage new housing monies to create additional permanent supportive housing (beginning summer 2021)”

As noted above, 3301 Kerner Boulevard was selected as an original Project Homekey site in the first round of the program. The Casa Buena (18 units) and S. Eliseo Drive (43 units) sites were to follow. Also of note, the City of San Rafael has been very active with the City’s AHTF. The City has allocated over \$5 million from the AHTF to create new affordable units in San Rafael.

In addition to funding permanent supportive housing, the City continues to put substantial additional resources into homelessness in terms of outreach resources, case management, neighborhood clean-up and job training, basic amenities like showers or restrooms, security services, grant applications, and significant staff resources across all City departments.

Additional Updates

- In December 2021, the City of San Rafael filled its vacant “Homeless Program Manager” position, continuing a commitment to dedicated staff on this topic that began in 2013 with the mental health liaison position and then in 2016 with the homeless program manager position. In June 2022, the City Council allocated additional funding for an analyst-type position to support these efforts.
- In December 2021, the Marin County Board of Supervisors set aside \$500,000 in matching funds to assist with support on homeless encampment strategies in San Rafael, Novato, and Sausalito. The staff report listed potential proposals could include service for encampment security, camp management, and outreach or other services.
- The County and City is seeking additional funding through the current State budget process which would add additional funds from the State, to be matched by the County, for efforts such as Interim Housing.
- San Rafael continues to advocate for additional support and housing at the County level. The City has seen the success of the SSA and believes that a similar program, or Interim Housing programs, would provide an ongoing option for interim shelter for unhoused individuals who are stabilizing before moving into housing.

Lastly, based on Marin County’s [Data Dashboard](#) from May 2022, since October 2017:

- 488 people have been housed in Permanent Supportive Housing, 10 in May. 94% are still housed.
- 72 veterans experiencing homelessness have been housed, four in May. Approximately 32 homeless veterans remain in Marin.
- 111 homeless families have been housed, six in May.
- Approximately 43 unsheltered and 36 sheltered homeless families remain in Marin.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

RECOMMENDATION:

Accept informational report and provide direction to staff.