



SCCBC Update on Homelessness

Board Presentation March 21st, 2019

Homelessness in Santa Cruz County

- 2017 Point in Time Count:
 - 2,249 people experiencing homelessness on any given night (2017)
 - 80 percent unsheltered
 - 13 percent are chronically homeless (5+ years with debilitating condition)
 - 68 percent became homeless in Santa Cruz
 - 52 percent have been here more than 5 years
 - 27 percent have been in the foster care system
- **55 percent have a disabling condition**
- A disabling condition is defined here as a physical disability, mental illness, chronic depression, alcohol or drug abuse, chronic health problems, HIV/AIDS, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), or a developmental disability.

All In Plan to end homelessness

- The **All In Plan** consists of eight “strategic priorities” that reflect on how to best address the issue of homelessness:
 1. Transforming the Crisis Response System
 2. Increasing Access to Permanent Housing
 3. Integrating Systems and Community Support
 4. Ending Chronic and Other Adult Homelessness
 5. Ending Family Homelessness
 6. Addressing Needs in South County
 7. Initiating a Response to Youth and Young Adult Homelessness
 8. Ending Veteran Homelessness

City Council Recommendations on Homelessness (2016)

The Homeless Coordinating Committee was a six month ad hoc city council subcommittee designed to “cooperatively exchange information and identify actions to change homelessness in our community”.

Core Recommendations

- **Short Term**

1. Securing better resources: proper hygiene facilities, storage facilities, electric device charging facilities, increasing mental health resources, and access to information about resources for the homeless on the city webpage
2. Coordinating with other areas with high homeless populations to exchange ideas on solutions
3. Supporting Coordinated Entry, a program plan for programs to communicate with each other to work together to “support homeless individuals program by program”

- **Long Term**

1. Considering San Francisco’s navigation center model
2. Developing more housing
3. Funding a permanent year-round homeless shelter and a day center with basic services

River Street Camp

Created initially by the City of Santa Cruz as a temporary shelter to accommodate overflow of homeless individuals, the River Street shelter was made available for approximately **60 participants** to have shelter and storage facilities. This controversial city-mandated program, with a monthly budget of nearly **\$90,000**, was initially slated to last for 5 months — though it ended up lasting 9 — while another more permanent structure could be located as a shelter site.

However, primarily due to opposition from multiple neighborhoods a site was never designated and the camp was abandoned without a next step in place.

Martin vs. Boise Decision

- Cities are no longer allowed to punish the individuals for sleeping outside if they do not have access to shelters
1. “[T]he the Eighth Amendment prohibits the state from punishing an involuntary act or condition if it is the unavoidable consequence of one's status or being.”
Robinson v. California (1962) 370 U.S. 660 (invalidating California statute classifying narcotic addition as criminal offense.
 2. “This principle compels the conclusion that the Eighth Amendment prohibits the imposition of criminal penalties for sitting, sleeping, or lying outside on public property for homeless individuals who cannot obtain shelter.” Martin v. Boise

HEAP Funding

- *Homelessness Emergency Aid Program*
- \$20 million over the next two years (2019-20) in the form of a grant to address the homelessness crisis
 - Funds expire after the two year deadline
- \$500 million block grant program designed to provide direct assistance to cities and counties throughout California
- Multiple community groups have begun collaborating how to spend the funds including a 2×2 committee made up of two City Council Members and two County Supervisors

Board of Supervisor Recommended Projects:

- New Laurel Street Salvation Army family shelter
- New 1220 River Street program
- Expansion of the Association of Faith Communities shelter program,
- Initiation of a small-scale safe parking program
- Expansion of Warming Center capacity, and continuation of Veterans of Foreign Wars program in Live Oak
- Provide \$5,000 in funding to the current warming center
- Provide 30-day closure and shelter transition notice to the residents of the Gateway Plaza Encampment on February 13 with a planned full abatement by March 15.
- Designation of a new navigation center by July 2019.

Santa Cruz City Council Updates (3/19):

- New Shelter Emergency resolution adopted that allows for temporary ease of permitting for new shelters
- Consideration of two temporary shelter types:
 - Temporary encampments: 24/7 access, either managed by a nonprofit or self governed
 - Safe Sleeping and Storage Only, 9pm-6am sleeping, day storage, City managed
- City Staff Narrowed to 3 locations, San Lorenzo park, Lot 24 (Depot Park), and East Cliff/San Lorenzo Street (Lower Ocean)
- Lot 24: 50 of 100 target shelter beds, Safe Sleeping/Storage Only, Sobriety Requirement
- Re-evaluated every 30 days, new shelters must be approved by City Council
- Allows for cooperation with County on HEAP funding
- No commitment to close Gateway Camp, though goal of April 17th should new facilities be open

Introduction

Distinctions between Navigation Centers and Rapid Rehousing:

- Navigation Centers: cater to “**severely depressed, chronically homeless**” and less rules are implemented in the actual centers themselves (**Low Barrier Shelter**)
- Rapid Rehousing: focuses on solving individuals and families’ “**immediate crises**” to help people obtain permanent housing at a faster rate
- Rapid Rehousing assists with homeless individuals who have been homeless for a **short** time period, whereas Navigation centers target individuals who have been homeless for a **longer** time period

Housing First Approach

Prioritizing permanent housing

- Basic necessities come before service programs such as mental health and drug rehabilitation
 - these supportive services are offered to those who desire assistance, but participation is not mandatory (*there are exceptions*)
- The freedom of individuals to have a say in their housing process leads to a higher success rate of permanent housing (hudexchange.info)
- Individuals in a Housing First program are less likely to use emergency services such as hospitals and emergency shelters
- “A Housing First program could cost up to \$23,000 less per consumer per year than a shelter program”

Navigation Centers

- Model was first established in San Francisco in 2015; “About 57% of nearly 3,000 people who have come through S.F.’s navigation centers get housed”
- Individuals are allowed to stay at the center 24/7 with their partners, pets, and all of their belongings; receive three meals a day
- Centers are fully staffed and their staff work with clients on an intake, assessment, and discharge model
- Relies on partnerships with nonprofits
 - For example, in San Diego, the city partnered with the Family Health Center of San Diego which had experience working with homeless individuals to provide health care and support services (sandiego.gov)

Funding of Navigation Centers

- Funding is usually provided by a ballot measure or a new tax
→ For example, Measure G
- In San Francisco, \$10 million dollars of these funds were secured from the state by Assemblymember Phil Ting, Chair of the Budget Committee.
- Homelessness Emergency Aid Fund which includes \$20 million dollars for Santa Cruz to use over the next two years

Rapid Rehousing

Consists of three steps:

1. Housing Identification- location short term housing that best coincides with the needs of an individual
2. Renting and Move In Assistance- paying for the cost of short term rental housing and assisting in the transportation of the individual and their belongings
3. Case Management- Assisting with barriers such as unemployment and mental health to help individuals independently sustain permanent housing

Rapid Rehousing (cont.)

- To locate permanent housing at a faster rate, Rapid Rehousing requires engaging in partnerships with landlords, property owners, *and businesses* who they negotiate with to reserve housing spots for the homeless

Rapid Rehousing managed by private corporations:

- In the San Jose area, private corporations such as the Bill Wilson Center offer no requirements for eligibility
- Other corporations such as Life Moves requires an income “earning less than 200% of the national poverty level”

Funding of Rapid Rehousing

- Among the Federal funding sources that can finance rapid re-housing include HUD's Continuum of Care and Emergency Solutions Grants(ESG) Programs, HHS's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Title IV E Foster Care and Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), and the VA's Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program.”
- The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 provided \$1.5 billion in funding to the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program, and San Jose receiving \$4 million locally to fund their own Rapid Rehousing Program (sanjoseca.gov).
- The City of Santa Ana uses funds from their Emergency Housing Grant to assist with the their Rapid Rehousing program

Business Leader Involvement

- In Los Angeles, the Business Leaders Task Force consists of “a partnership between the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce and United Way of Greater Los Angeles”
- This tasks force works on finding housing solutions using their collective resources as well as supporting specific ballot measures to help supply more funds for housing