



September 6, 2017

Jim Mellander, Foreperson
Civil Grand Jury
725 Court Street
Martinez, CA 94553-0091

Re: Response to Grand Jury Report No. 1707: *Homelessness in the Cities*

Dear Mr. Mellander,

This correspondence serves as the City of Walnut Creek's response to your July 9, 2017 letter regarding Grand Jury Report No. 1707 – "Homelessness in the Cities"

FINDINGS

F1. CORE teams are most likely to be the first point of entry for the homeless into the County's Coordinate Entry System.

Response: The City of Walnut Creek partially agrees with this finding. The CORE teams are the most likely first point of entry for homeless who are living on the streets and not otherwise seeking services. For homeless individuals who are living in cars, or have other temporary arrangements, or who are actively seeking other services, their first point of entry is more likely to be through the 211 line or a service provider.

F2. CORE teams can successfully identify a homeless individual in need of physical or mental health services.

Response: The City of Walnut Creek agrees with this finding.

F3. CORE teams have the resources to identify if there are vacant shelter beds available in the County.

Response: The City of Walnut Creek agrees with this finding.

F4. CORE teams are equipped and have the authorization to transport homeless individuals to a medical facility or to a homeless shelter.

Response: The City of Walnut Creek partially agrees with this finding. The City is aware that CORE teams have the authorization to transport homeless individuals to a homeless shelter, warming shelter, or other service provider.

F5. CORE teams build trust between the homeless and police departments.

Response: The City of Walnut Creek agrees with this finding.

F6. The City found various and novel ways to fund its CORE teams.

Response: The City of Walnut Creek agrees with this finding. The City of Walnut Creek has been very proactive and innovative in its approach to funding homeless services.

F7. Walnut Creek packaged impact fees, other local fees, and density bonuses as incentives for a non-profit developer to build 45-units for the homeless in Walnut Creek.

Response: The City of Walnut Creek partially agrees with this finding. The 45-unit project will be restricted to very-low and extremely-low income Walnut Creek residents, and many homeless may qualify based on the income eligibility criteria. However, the units are not designated for the homeless.

F8. Walnut Creek's general fund contribution to a local non-profit organization helped the organization in successfully establishing a homeless shelter.

Response: The City of Walnut Creek agrees with this 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.

Response: The City of Walnut Creek disagrees with this finding. The City of Walnut Creek does not have an approved written homeless plan. The cities noted above did participate in the strategic planning process for the county-wide strategic plan, but individual cities have not adopted their own plans. The County-wide plan is generally accepted by all of the Entitlement cities, as well as the urban county (also an entitlement jurisdiction for CDBG), which represents the non-Entitlement cities.

F10. The City appears to be in compliance with the California Housing Accountability Act.

Response: The City of Walnut Creek agrees with this finding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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.

Response: This recommendation has been implemented. The City is jointly funding a CORE team with the City of Concord for the 17/18 fiscal year.

R2. The City should consider providing incentives for developers to construct housing for the extremely low income, very low income, and homeless populations.

Response: This recommendation has been implemented. The City currently provides incentives for affordable housing development through its density bonus ordinance, but the incentives are not exclusive to the categories listed above, and none of the incentives are specific to homeless populations. The City is embarking on a public process to consider expanding the density bonus incentives; and as part of this process, further analysis of specific targeted affordability categories will occur.

R3. 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 the extremely low income and homeless populations

Response: This recommendation has been implemented. The City has previously used Successor Agency, CDBG and Impact Fees to fund affordable housing, but not exclusively at the extremely low income category (though inclusive of); and not specifically for housing for the homeless populations. The City does not currently use general fund money to fund affordable housing directly, though general funds support the housing programs by funding program administration and public service grant programs, including funding for homeless services.

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.

Response: The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. The City may adopt the County-wide strategic plan, but doing so would only serve to formalize the City's commitment to the strategic plan. It is not efficient for individual cities to independently adopt their own comprehensive homeless plans separate from the county-wide plan since homelessness is addressed primarily on a county-wide level.

The City Council approved this response at their September 5, 2017 meeting.

Sincerely,



Dan Buckshi
City Manager