CITY OF BERKELEY

Homeless Commission

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To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Homeless Commission

Submitted by: Carole Marasovic, Chairperson, Homeless Commission

Subject: Developing a Mechanism to Facilitate an Improved Homeless Point-In-Time Count

RECOMMENDATION
The Homeless Commission recommends to Council that Council refer to staff to assign an intern or seek a volunteer affiliation, through an educational institution, to conduct outreach to, and engage with, community stakeholders including homeless advocates and persons who are experiencing or have experienced homelessness, to identify how homeless persons can be more thoroughly counted during the upcoming 2021 Berkeley Homeless Point-In-Time count.

SUMMARY
The 2019 Homeless Point-In-Time count produced gaps where much of the homeless population was clearly undercounted. To arrive at a more accurate count, resulting in potential additional monies to the City to mitigate homelessness, and to better inform needs to be met during the Council allocation process, there needs to be increased outreach to community stakeholders to identify means of more thoroughly counting homeless persons.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION
Staff can better advise of the costs but the use of an intern or alternatively, a volunteer affiliation, through an educational institution, to conduct outreach to, and engage community stakeholders would minimize costs.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS
The 2019 Homeless Point-In-Time Count produced results of over 1,108 homeless persons in Berkeley. Yet, there were obvious inaccuracies such as no unsheltered families having been counted; a radical decrease in the percentage of transition age youth from the 2017 Point-in-Time Count which is unable to be confirmed one way or the other; and conjecture that homeless adults are being significantly undercounted because of the lack of visibility where they are homeless. To this effect, among the adult homeless population, many persons live outside in singles or doubles in a manner to conceal their homeless status.

Developing a Mechanism to Facilitate an Improved Homeless Point-In-Time Count
<div align="right">
CONSENT CALENDAR
April 14, 2020
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BACKGROUND
The Homeless Commission voted on January 8, 2020 as follows:
Action: M/S/C Mulligan/ Marasovic to approve the recommendation as written.

Vote: *Ayes:* Mulligan, Marasovic, Kealoha-Blake, Behm-Steinberg
      Noes: Andrew. *Abstain:* Hill. *Absent*: Hirpara.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY
There are no identifiable environmental opportunities associated with the content of this report.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION
A more thorough homeless count would better inform Council and staff how incoming homeless monies to Berkeley should be allocated. An increase in the number of persons counted could potentially result in additional monies allocated to the City to address homelessness. A significant challenge is identifying the location of homeless persons who choose to keep their location less visible; community stakeholders can best advise how to lessen that challenge for a more thorough homeless count.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED
Recommending a supplemental homeless count was considered. However, a supplemental homeless count limited to Berkeley would not be recognized by the County or other entities and could be at great expense to the City of Berkeley without reaping any financial benefit to the City nor to the homeless population through additional allocations. Of greater benefit would be focusing on improving the HUD Homeless Point-In-Time Count through identifying how additional homeless persons could be counted.

CITY MANAGER
The City Manager concurs that community stakeholders including homeless advocates and persons who are experiencing or have experienced homelessness should be consulted on how to best identify how homeless persons can be more thoroughly counted during the upcoming 2021 Berkeley Homeless Point-In-Time count and will direct staff to manage the consultation.

CONTACT PERSON
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