REVISED AGENDA MATERIAL

Meeting Date: January 23, 2018
Item Number: 44
Item Description: Update on Homeless Task Force Recommendations
Submitted by: Mayor Jesse Arreguin

This item has been revised to accurately reflect the title of the Assistant to the City Manager for Neighborhood Services.
To: Members of the City Council

From: Mayor Jesse Arreguin

Subject: Update On Berkeley Homeless Task Force Recommendations

INTRODUCTION
On June 23, 2015, the Berkeley Homeless Task Force presented their recommendations for increased homeless services to the City Council. This report provides a summary and progress update of all recommendations.

BACKGROUND
The Berkeley Homeless Task Force (BHTF) was a community-driven process involving hundreds of stakeholders that began meeting regularly in 2013 to develop solutions to homelessness. The goals of BHFT were to facilitate a conversation over time between service providers, homeless persons, students, business owners, and the broader community; understand challenges; identify common goals; and develop a plan for improved services.

After deliberating for two years, the BHTF completed their final report, Berkeley Homeless Task Force: Report to Berkeley Mayor and City Council, and presented their findings, which were divided into two tiers. Tier One Recommendations addressed critical needs within the homeless population that they felt should be acted on immediately. Tier Two Recommendations mainly focused on increasing housing, and would require more time and resources to implement. Top priorities identified in the report included investing in new services to address service gaps, adopting a Housing First Goal, and working toward expanding the supply of housing and housing subsidies with supportive services.

Since taking office on December 1, 2016, Mayor Arreguin has made addressing Berkeley homelessness a top priority. At the first Council Meeting of his tenure, the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was activated which doubled shelter capacity within a week, and a City Council Homeless Ad Hoc Committee was established. Since then, the Mayor’s Working Group on Homelessness was convened to address the gaps identified in the Homeless Task Force Recommendations, the Pathways Project was moved forward by Council, and phase 1 of the Project, a low barrier shelter coupled with services, will be open in early 2018.

Although much progress has been made to address homelessness in our community, there is still more to do. This update of the Berkeley Homeless Task Force
Recommendations provides the status of all recommendations in each section of the report, including: Tier One Recommendations, Tier Two Recommendations, Additional Recommendations, and Recommendations/Statements on Criminalizing the Homelessness.

BERKELEY HOMELESS TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Tier One Recommendations

Expand City Homeless Outreach Team
- Homeless Outreach and Transition Team HOTT has been expanded. Previously, one staff person focused primarily on responding to complaints and providing support to homeless people. The team now has 5 FTE budgeted and 3 working in the field. The team will be fully staffed within the next few months. The purpose is to work intensively with a defined caseload of chronically homeless and mentally ill people to help them into services, benefits and housing.
- HUB is expanding housing navigators from 3 to 8 to provide more intensive home finding. They are in the process of hiring and should have a team assembled in first quarter of 2018.
- UC Berkeley has hired on outreach social worker for People’s Park and Telegraph Avenue. This outreach worker is connecting homeless on the Southside and in People’s Park to services to benefits and is collaborating with City HHCS staff, HOTT and other outreach workers.
- The Mayor’s staff along with a subcommittee from our Community Based Organizations have compiled a Homeless Resource Guide for distribution by BPD, Suitcase Clinic, Libraries and other outreach workers. The guide provides a comprehensive list of services and providers for daily needs as well as long term assistance and will be updated quarterly.
- Pathways (see Tier 2 Recommendations – Short Term Navigation Center) will include 2 full-time outreach staff.

Expand Mobile Crisis Team
- Mobile Crisis Staff have been expanded and there are now 4 FTE.
- Hours of operation have been changed to 11:30 am to 10:00 pm, 365 days a year.

Fund Increased CIT Training
- Officers and Dispatchers are cycled through a week-long CIT training when there is an availability.

Public Restrooms
- Temporary Toilets and Handwashing Stations will be added adjacent to major encampment areas and in other identified locations throughout the City following funding during the mid-year budget cycle.
- Permanent toilet locations are now available by inquiring at any Berkeley Public Library and noted in the new Homeless Resource Guide pamphlet and updated quarterly.
Storage Space for the Homeless

- Money allocated to storage in Downtown Berkeley was diverted to fund the winter shelter of 2016/17. Additional money was provided from the General Fund and from personal donations to keep the shelter open, beyond the scheduled closing of February 28, through June 15th.
- A pilot program for storage in the Civic Center Park area has been funded through the mid-year budget cycle. If successful, additional funding and locations will be funded during the June 2018 allocation.
- Pathways will have storage space available for residents at its location on 2nd Street.
- The Winter Shelter will have storage space available for overnight guests at its location.
- Storage locations will be added to the Homeless Resource Guide pamphlet at the time of reprinting (quarterly).

Warming Centers

- Warming Centers were provided as part of the Winter 2016/17 EOC implementation at two locations. They were open for over a month with relatively poor attendance even on the most inclement days.
- Berkeley Public Library is working in partnership with the City and is open to all homeless for warming and cooling during all business hours. That Information is now available at all CBO locations and in the new Homeless Resource Guide pamphlet.
- The MASC is now open 7 days/week from 9am – noon, and increase from 4 days/week.

Tier Two Recommendations

Rehab/Renting Vacant Homes/Multi-Family Buildings

- An inventory of multi-family buildings has been completed and identified by the Mayor’s Housing Task Force. That group is conducting outreach to potential investors who could purchase the property for extremely low to low income households.
- Measure A1 affordable housing bond money is also now available for small site acquisition. Once the County has approved all implementation policies, major advertising will be done to introduce the program. Advertising will be focused on promoting the program to smaller developers/owners for the purpose of purchasing or improve properties.

Short Term Shelter Navigation Center

- The Pathways Project will provide 50 beds in a low barrier shelter on city owned property in West Berkeley. The center is scheduled to be open in February of 2018. Restrooms, showers, meals and social service appointments will be
offered on site. Estimated stay will be 5 – 6 months. Rapid rehousing money is also available with a focus on getting people housed or reunited with family.

**Alternative Housing Options (tiny houses, micro units, ADUs, vehicle camping, evening encampment)**

- Additionally, the Pathways Project will provide an additional 40 – 50 tiny homes for transitional housing on the West Berkeley site if a HUD grant is awarded to the City or additional funds are secured in some other way.
- Barriers to ADU construction have been lifted and Councilmembers are having community meetings to promote the building of ADUs within our neighborhoods.
- Step-up housing (micro units) is being analyzed by the City Planning Department for a site on University Avenue. Funding will be an issue unless there is access to additional rapid rehousing dollars through CBDG or HUD.
- The City Council Homeless Ad-Hoc Committee is looking at options for a sanctioned vehicle camping location and a policy that would support such a recommendation.

**Additional Recommendations**

**Ambassador Training for Interacting with Homeless**

- In the past Ambassador Training was completed with BPD, Berkeley Mental Health, and Berkeley Mobile Crisis. A new schedule for training with outside consultants will be scheduled for 2018 and calendared on a more regular basis.

**Eviction Prevention Funding**

- City Council allocated $300,000 in the 2017-2019 budget for anti-displacement services that will be managed by EBCLC.
- $3.5M from A-1 (boomerang) Funds have been allocated for anti-displacement within Alameda County and an RFP has been released. Through the efforts of the Mayor’s Office an additional $4M of A-1 (boomerang) Funds will be available for Homeless prevention/services.

**Outreach to TAY youth**

- YEAH shelter is now open 12 months/year.
- UC Berkeley has an outreach worker in People’s Park and on Telegraph Avenue who is working with individuals to get them connected to services and resources
- YEAH is providing outreach one day/week in Berkeley pursuant to the terms of their contract.

**Expand Shelter + Care**

- The City submitted a grant request to HUD for an additional 40 SPC certificates. Grants will be awarded in January 2018.
Employ More Caseworkers
- An additional 5 housing navigators are in the process of being added to the HUB to support relationship building and connection to resources and housing.
- 4 additional HOTT Team members have been added for mental health case management.

Modify Housing Trust Fund Guidelines to Prioritize Supportive and TAY and Chronically Homeless Housing
- Staff is looking at broader HTF modifications during the first half 2018 with the intent of providing additional Section 8 vouchers and housing opportunities.

Raise Funding Levels to CBOs
- Through the Mayor’s Homeless Team, identifying the additional funds to optimize service delivery is underway. The goal is to quantify the amount of resources needed for optimal service delivery and improve coordination so fundraising targets can be established.
- Fundraising from the business community, Bay Area employers and generous community members is in its infancy and there will be a major push and awareness campaign in Spring 2018.
- CBOs are currently in the process of establishing goals and developing a recommendation for a 1000 person plan to ensure that, in 5 years, every homeless person in Berkeley will be housed or have a shelter bed.

24/7 Shelter Access
- Residents of The Pathways Project will have 24/7 access.
- The plan for optimizing service delivery and CBO goals include 24/7 shelter access.

Improve Service Coordination
- The Mayor’s Homeless Team met with every service provider to better understand what they do, their challenges and then visited 10 shelters/drop-in centers to hear client needs and better understand their experiences. Reports were given to the City Council Homeless Ad-Hoc Committee at the end of each phase. Better coordination was a key take away.
- The Mayor’s office, in partnership with HHCS, is convening monthly CBO meetings to foster greater collaboration:
  - Overarching goals are being established
  - Opportunities for better coordination and service delivery are being discussed
  - Gaps identified
  - Funding needs quantified
  - Setting outcome goals
- The City has hired a new Homeless Coordinator, who with staff, are training CBO staff to improve client “hand-off” and working with COB executives in optimizing collaboration between providers.
Standardize Complaint Process for Downtown [and neighborhoods]
• New Community Services Assistant Deputy to the City Manager for Neighborhood Services has been hired and there will be one additional Neighborhood Services staff added in support to address complaints coming through the 311 system.

HHCS Homeless Services Ombudsman to Deal with Service Complaints
• Calls will initially be handled by the Community Services-Neighborhood Services Assistant Deputy-City Manager. Should additional resources be required, HHCS staff will be engaged to help support through resolution.

Expand EBT Cards
• This will be addressed as a line item need in the 1000 person plan.

Recommendations/Statements On Criminalization Of The Homeless

Track Homeless Infractions
• Accuracy in tracking homeless infractions is difficult. Many homeless individuals list an “address” and, therefore, are not considered to be “homeless” within the law enforcement system.

Improve Process For Any New Laws That Would Affect Homeless Individuals Or Families
• New policies are being vetted through the City Council Homeless Ad-Hoc Committee with consideration for and conversation with advocate and homeless persons.
• A new possessions policy has been implemented.
• Considerations for new sidewalk/encampment policies are under discussion.

Increase Communication Between Merchants And Homeless – Provide Training
• Homeless awareness and “what you can do” training will be launched 2nd quarter 2018 that will include merchants and residents throughout Berkeley - and perhaps the entire Bay Area.
• Homeless Resource Guides will be delivered to downtown Berkeley merchants and other affected neighborhood shopping venues.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS
No direct fiscal impact. Greater efficiencies in staff resources due to prioritization of work and alignment with budget and strategic plan goals.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY
There are no identifiable environmental effects or opportunities associated with the subject of this report.
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Attachments: