

CONSENT CALENDAR

May 29, 2018

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Councilmember Sophie Hahn, Mayor Jesse Arreguín,
Councilmembers Ben Bartlett, and Linda Maio
Subject: Declaring a California Homelessness State of Emergency

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution requesting that Governor Brown proclaim a California Homelessness State of Emergency, and send the Resolution to Governor Brown, State Senator Nancy Skinner, and State Assemblymember Tony Thurmond.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

BACKGROUND

Like many cities in California, Berkeley is facing a crisis, with homelessness rising by 17% from 2015 to 2017. Currently, approximately 1000 individuals experience homelessness every day, with almost 70% (664) unsheltered.¹ To address this crisis, the Berkeley City Council recently passed the Pathways Project, a comprehensive plan to address homelessness in Berkeley.²

Berkeley's focus in addressing homelessness is threefold:

1. **Prevention** - reducing the number of new people becoming homelessness;
2. **Access to Permanent and Supportive Housing** - ensuring homeless individuals can be housed and have meaningful opportunities to rebuild their lives; and
3. **An unbroken path from homelessness to housing** - harnessing existing programs and resources and adding new facilities and services to ensure that Berkeley's homeless get the intake, shelter and services necessary to be rehoused.

While homelessness has long been a challenge for the City of Berkeley, increases in the scope and duration of homelessness have provided a new sense of urgency. In 2013, Mayor Jesse Arreguín (a Councilmember at the time) formed the *Berkeley Homeless Task Force*, devoted to creating a comprehensive strategy for addressing homelessness.³ In 2016, Berkeley declared a Homeless Shelter Crisis (Resolution No. 67,357-N.S.), which allowed the City to explore a wide variety of response options to address the crisis, and to remove obstacles to their

¹https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City_Council/2017/07_Jul/Documents/2017-07-25_Item_53_2017_Berkeley_Homeless.aspx

²https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City_Council/2017/04_Apr/Documents/2017-04-04_Item_27_Addressing_Berkeley%E2%80%99s_Homeless_Crisis_The_Pathways_Project.aspx

³https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City_Council/2018/01_Jan/Documents/2018-01-23_Item_44_Update_On_Homeless_Task_Force_-_Rev.aspx

implementation. This declaration was extended to January 19, 2018, and again to January 19, 2020.⁴ Since then, Berkeley has taken steps to quickly strengthen existing and develop new programs, services and facilities, culminating in adoption of the Pathways Project. A major element of the Pathways Project, the STAIR Center, modelled after San Francisco's navigation centers, will open in June of 2018.

A May 12, 2018 San Francisco Chronicle Opinion piece, "The Bay Area's Housing Crisis Has Become an Emergency," clearly identifies our State's predicament as an *emergency*. It calls attention to California's crisis of homelessness, reporting that fewer and fewer low-income Californians are able to afford the basic cost of living, and asserting that efforts to provide housing for lower-income residents cannot succeed without state support. Over the past five years, California has experienced "a dramatic loss of state funding for affordable housing, substantial increases in the percentage of income lower-income Californians spent on rent, and enormous increases in homelessness,"⁵ and the State must do its part.

It is estimated that Berkeley spends \$72 per resident, per year on homeless services and housing; more than nearly every other city in Alameda County (only Oakland is estimated to spend more per resident, at \$73).⁶ By contrast, the Cities of Alameda and Pleasanton are estimated to spend only \$2 per resident, while Emeryville and Union City spend \$5. Despite the continued efforts of Berkeley's City Council and the community and City's commitment to addressing the crisis, resources continue to fall short of needs. Even with the addition of Alameda County resources, Berkeley is not able to shelter all who are living on our streets from night to night, or to meet the complex and costly challenges of providing health and mental health services, job training, housing counselling and other services - let alone permanent housing - to all who so desperately need them.

At the same time, homelessness is not unique to Berkeley; it is a regional and statewide crisis that knows few jurisdictional boundaries. Cities and counties across California are struggling to meet the housing and service needs of homeless individuals, despite committing significant resources. Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Jose, San Francisco, Oakland, and other municipalities have declared homeless shelter crises. The City of Los Angeles has proposed to double their homeless spending for 2018, allocating \$430 million starting in July of 2018, after seeing a 23% increase in homelessness since 2017.⁷ Sacramento's homeless population has increased 30% since 2015, with an 85% increase in their unsheltered homeless population.⁹

⁴https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City_Council/2017/10_Oct/Documents/2017-10-31_Item_10_Extension_of_Housing_Crisis_-_Rev_2.aspx

⁵<https://www.sfchronicle.com/opinion/editorials/article/Editorial-The-Bay-Area-s-housing-crisis-has-12908782.php?t=b56c5082c0>

⁶https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/96506/final_report_and_recommendations_on_homelessness_in_alameda_county_california_0.pdf

⁷ <http://www.vchcorp.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/2017-Homeless-Count-Results.pdf>

⁸<https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/california/articles/2018-04-16/los-angeles-plans-to-double-spending-on-homeless-crisis>

⁹ http://www.saccounty.net/Homelessness/Documents/2017_SacPIT_Final.pdf

Homelessness in Santa Clara County rose by 13% from 2016 to 2017.¹⁰ The City of San Francisco has allocated over \$300M of its 2018 budget to homeless services, and successfully housed over 1,150 individuals since opening its first Navigation Center in 2015.¹¹ Despite this significant investment and progress, San Francisco's homeless population has continued to increase.¹²

Homelessness in California rose nearly 14% in 2017, to more than 134,000 people.¹³ By contrast, the national homeless population increased by only 1% in 2017.¹⁴ California also counts a disproportionate share of the nation's homeless, with 12% of the US population but a full 22% of the homeless. A much higher rate of California's homeless are unsheltered; 68% to a national average of 24%.¹⁵ Finally, California spends only \$5,000 per homeless individual on services and housing, while New York and Massachusetts spend three times as much: \$17,000 and \$14,000 per homeless individual, respectively. Governor Brown's May Revision of the State budget does include \$359 million in new spending to address homelessness across the state, but even this amount is inadequate to address the crisis.¹⁶

Numbers paint a broad statistical picture, but cannot quantify the misery and degradation that is experienced by our homeless community members, and in particular homeless youth and seniors and those who are disabled, or struggling with illness or addiction. It is simply unconscionable that the fifth largest economy in the world cannot find a way to house and care for its most vulnerable.

California is facing an emergency unprecedented in scope and impact. Homelessness has reached crisis proportions, and the level of human suffering for almost 135,000 of our residents, is as severe and intolerable as the harm, loss and displacement felt by victims of California's tragic fires and mudslides. Cities and counties cannot address this crisis without emergency funding and support from the State, and we call on the Governor to declare a State of Emergency.

Section 8558 of Title 2, Division 1, Chapter 7 of the California Government Code, defines a State of Emergency as:

¹⁰<https://www.sfchronicle.com/opinion/editorials/article/Editorial-The-Bay-Area-s-housing-crisis-has-12908782.php?t=b56c5082c0>

¹¹<http://www.sfexaminer.com/mayor-lee-unveil-10-1b-budget-increased-spending-address-homelessness-opiate-abuse/>

¹²<http://hsh.sfgov.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/2017-SF-Point-in-Time-Count-General-FINAL-6.21.17.pdf>

¹³<http://www.politifact.com/california/statements/2018/mar/27/travis-allen/has-californias-homeless-population-skyrocketed-an/>

¹⁴<https://www.npr.org/2017/12/06/568605069/homeless-population-rises-driven-by-west-coast-affordable-housing-crisis>

¹⁵https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/96506/final_report_and_recommendations_on_homelessness_in_alameda_county_california_0.pdf

¹⁶ <https://www.gov.ca.gov/2018/05/11/governor-brown-releases-revised-2018-19-state-budget/>

“the duly proclaimed existence of conditions of ... extreme peril to the safety of persons and property within the state caused by ... conditions ... which, by reason of their magnitude, are or are likely to be beyond the control of the services, personnel, equipment, and facilities of any single county, city and county, or city and require the combined forces of a mutual aid region or regions to combat”¹⁷

Clearly, homelessness is a state of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property within the State of California. Conditions have reached a magnitude such that they are beyond the control of the services, personnel, equipment and facilities of the City of Berkeley, and of the combined efforts of Alameda County and the City of Berkeley. We know the same is true of other Cities and Counties grappling with what is truly a statewide crisis. State-level intervention is called for to address our cities’ and citizens’ humanitarian crisis. For these reasons, the City of Berkeley hereby calls upon Governor Brown to declare a Homelessness State of Emergency and to make additional State resources available to address the crisis of homelessness.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

There are no environmental opportunities or risks associated with this recommendation

CONTACT PERSON

Councilmember Sophie Hahn, District 5, (510) 981-7150
Mayor Jesse Arreguin, (510) 981-7100

ATTACHMENTS

1. Resolution

¹⁷ http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=GOV§ionNum=8558

RESOLUTION NO. ##, ###-N.S.

CALLING ON GOVERNOR BROWN TO PROCLAIM
A CALIFORNIA HOMELESSNESS STATE OF EMERGENCY

WHEREAS, Berkeley is facing an emergency, with homelessness rising by 17% from 2015 to 2017; and

WHEREAS, approximately 1000 individuals experience homelessness every day in Berkeley, with almost 70% unsheltered; and

WHEREAS, increases in the scope and duration of homelessness in Berkeley, and throughout the State of California, have provided a new sense of urgency to address the crisis; and

WHEREAS, the Berkeley City Council is implementing the Pathways Project, a comprehensive plan to address homelessness, focused on prevention, access to permanent and supportive housing, and creating an unbroken path from homelessness to housing and rebuilt lives; and

WHEREAS, in 2016, Berkeley declared a Homeless Shelter Crisis (Res. No. 67,357-N.S.), which allowed the City to explore a wide variety of response options to address the crisis, and to remove obstacles to their implementation, and recently extended the crisis until January 19th, 2020 (Res. No. 68,206–N.S.); and

WHEREAS, It is estimated that Berkeley spends \$72 per resident, per year on homeless services and housing; and

WHEREAS, even with the addition of Alameda County resources, Berkeley is unable to shelter all of its homeless residents, or to meet the complex and costly challenges of providing affordable housing, health and mental health services, job training, housing counselling and other desperately needed services to those in need; and

WHEREAS, homelessness is a regional and statewide crisis that no one City or County is able to solve on its own, and Cities and Counties across the State are struggling to meet the housing and service needs of the homeless; and

WHEREAS, Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Jose, San Francisco, Oakland, and other municipalities across the state have declared homeless shelter crises; and

WHEREAS, while California cities are doing more than ever to address homelessness, their homeless populations continue to grow to record numbers; and

WHEREAS, homelessness in California grew nearly 14% from 2016 to 2017 to more than 134,000 individuals, while the national homeless population grew by only 1%; and

WHEREAS, California is home to only 12% of the US population, but has 22% of the nation's homeless; and

WHEREAS, California spends on average only \$5,000 per homeless individual, compared to \$17,000 in New York and \$14,000 in Massachusetts; and

WHEREAS, cities and counties cannot address the homeless crisis without emergency funding and support from the State.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Berkeley does hereby call upon Governor Jerry Brown to exercise his executive power to declare a California Homelessness State of Emergency, and make significant funds available to support the State's overwhelmed cities and counties.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Clerk shall transmit copies of this resolution to Governor Jerry Brown, State Senator Nancy Skinner, and State Assemblymember Tony Thurmond.