

TASK FORCE ON HOMELESSNESS

Thursday, November 12, 2015, 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
City Hall Community Room
2929 Tapo Canyon Road, Simi Valley, CA 93063

AGENDA

1. Call to Order/Welcome/Pledge of Allegiance/Roll Call
2. Agenda Review
3. Approval of Minutes
4. Public Statements/Comments
This is the time allotted for statements or comments on matters within the subject matter and jurisdiction of the Task Force on Homelessness. Statements and comments are limited to no more than five (5) minutes per speaker.
5. Informational Presentation
 - a. The Homeless Homed Video
6. New Business
 - a. Recommendations of the Community Homeless Education Campaign Subcommittee
 - b. Consideration of the Continuation of the Task Force on Homelessness
7. Task Force Member Comments
This is the time allotted for Task Force member statements or comments on matters within the subject matter and jurisdiction of the Task Force on Homelessness, to request a future agenda item, or to give an Ad Hoc Committee Report. This is also the time to make any announcements related to community events and other items of interest.
8. Task Force on Homelessness Coordinator's Report
9. Adjournment: Thursday, February 11, 2016, 3:30 p.m.

/s/
Sommer Barwick
Director of Community Services

If any interested individual has a disability that may require accommodation to participate in this meeting, please contact the Task Force on Homelessness Coordinator at (805) 583-6762. Upon advance notification, reasonable arrangements will be made to provide accessibility to the meeting.

TASK FORCE ON HOMELESSNESS
DRAFT MINUTES

1. Call To Order/Pledge of Allegiance/Roll Call
City Council Member Keith Mashburn called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. Jennifer Santos noted that a quorum was present. The attendance detail is available on the last page of the minutes.
2. Agenda Review
The agenda was accepted as presented
3. Approval of Minutes
By the consensus of the Task Force, the May 14, 2015 minutes were approved as presented.
4. Public Statements/Comments: None
5. Informational Presentations
 - a. Success Story of a Formally Homeless Individual
Heather Doan spoke about her experience of being homeless and her success of becoming housed and completing an addiction recovery program. Ms. Doan stated that her mother was a former Executive Director of the Samaritan Center. When Ms. Doan went through a divorce, she unfortunately became homeless and became a client of the Samaritan Center. Without the help and support from the Samaritan Center, she would not have been able to overcome the challenges she faced with homelessness in Simi Valley. To show her appreciation of their services, Ms. Doan helps other homeless individuals by volunteering at the Samaritan Center.
 - b. Overview of the HomeShare Program
Beth Shephard from Ventura County Area Agency on Aging provided an overview about HomeShare. The program provides assistance by matching home providers, primarily seniors, with home seekers whom are willing to help with household tasks, transportation, companionship, financial support, or a combination of these in exchange for affordable housing. When a potential housing match is made, HomeShare conducts a detailed screening process of all the parties involved. Although the program is not limited to seniors, it provides alternative housing options for seniors. Housing arrangements are beneficial to both parties involved if the rental arrangements are constructed for the needs specific to both parties.

6. New Business

- a. Discussion and recommendation of proposed changes to Transit Fares and Senior Service Age

Anna Medina, Community Services Administrative Officer and Mara Malch Senior Management Analyst provided a presentation about the proposed changes to Transit Fares and Senior Service Age. Due to state legislation, the City is now required to recover a 20% portion of fixed-route expenses, and 10% of ADA Paratransit/DAR expenses through fare revenue. These requirements are currently not being met and Simi Valley Transit last revised the fares in 2003. It is proposed to increase the eligibility age of senior riders from the age of 60 to 65, to provide consistency with other local transit agencies. The proposed changes will allow Simi Valley Transit to provide comparable services and fares on a regional basis and further the City's ability to meet state requirements.

The Taskforce members had the following questions and comments, followed by the responses from staff:

Is there a database to monitor the changes with ridership to determine if the fees will need to be adjusted in the future?

Once the fare boxes are installed, staff will be able to closely track ridership. There may be a chance that the fares will be adjusted after the consultant reviews the fare revenues.

Has there been a tracking system established to determine how many donations were not donated for DAR?

A system was not established to determine how many riders provide donations.

Are there other jurisdictions that conduct regular rate increases?

The City of Moorpark and Gold Coast Transit District have increased their rates on a more frequent basis. The proposed rates for the City are comparable rates with other local jurisdictions.

There is a concern that riders will not be able to afford the new rates, especially for the seniors who currently do not pay. How will these riders be able to continue riding?

This issue is being considered. There has been discussion of having subsidized fares in which riders would contact their service providers to get passes.

There is an importance to have a balance between riders and the service rates. Is there a way to maintain donations that would be directed to a Transit Fare Fund to offset the costs?

There has been discussion, and that idea will be considered further.

Upon conclusion and discussion a motion was made by Betty Eskey and seconded by Toni Freeland to support the proposed changes to the Transit Fares and the Senior Service Age. The motion passed unanimously.

b. Discussion of the recommendations of the 2015 County Homeless Count

At the May 14, 2015 meeting, the Task Force requested to discuss the five recommendations presented in the 2015 Ventura County Homeless Count and Subpopulation Survey. The Survey recommended that the county and each city take necessary steps to reduce homelessness by first focusing on unsheltered veterans and families. Reducing homelessness for one subpopulation can demonstrate success amongst others. However, the lack of available housing decreases the ability to quickly place homeless individuals into permanent housing.

There are approximately 95 Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing vouchers in Ventura County and 10 are presently underutilized. The Ventura County Housing Authority (VCHA) administers Section 8 vouchers and residents struggle to find landlords or property owners that accept these vouchers due to the misperception about affordable housing or their desire to rent their units at the higher market rate. This puts residents at risk of losing affordable housing options. Efforts are being made to identify the gaps in service through the Ventura County Continuum of Care and staff from local organizations. In October, County staff for the Continuum will have a System Design Clinic hosted by the National Alliance to End Homelessness. This event will be by invitation only for key local leaders and social service providers. The event will include discussion and evaluation of the current system used and to create a plan to strengthen the effectiveness of reducing homeless in Ventura County.

Additional advocacy is needed to construct affordable housing, especially for very low income residents. Consideration of forming a subcommittee to investigate and provide recommendations about alternative affordable housing options was discussed. Some ideas that were brought up included, possibilities of converting older hotels into single room occupancy units, refurbished cargo containers, tiny houses, and how other communities succeeded in achieving these alternatives. Concerns about the high cost of property and shortage of available land was also discussed and it was stated that a subcommittee would not be formed. It was further stated that those individuals interested in housing alternatives should research the possibilities outside the purview of the City's Task Force.

c. Discussion of Implementing a Community Homeless Education Campaign

Jennifer Santos, Management Analyst provided an overview of the importance of informing the community about homelessness in Simi

Valley. The focus would entail the causes and reasons for homelessness and methods that are being used within Simi Valley and throughout Ventura County to reduce and prevent the incidents of homelessness. Due to the lack of affordable housing, families and individuals are at risk of becoming homeless on a daily basis. Emphasis is needed to inform the community about the misperceptions about homelessness, the need for alternative types of affordable housing, and what successful methods have been achieved in other communities to reduce homelessness. It was the consensus of the Task Force to form a Community Homeless Education Campaign subcommittee consisting of Betty Eskey, Toni Freeland, Michael Nigh, June-Marie von Osinski, and Karol Schulkin.

7. Task Force Member Comments

Sergeant Steve Shorts stated that on August 8, staff from the Simi Valley Police Department and Community Services met with Ventura County Watershed Protection District, Ventura County Public Works, staff from the Ventura County Continuum of Care, and Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District, to discuss the County's ongoing improvements to the infrastructure and habitat restoration in the Arroyo Simi at the west end of Simi Valley. This is necessary to prepare for the anticipated El Nino. Improvements are to take place this upcoming December to February 2016. Outreach with local service providers will be planned in the upcoming months to notify homeless individuals residing in the area about the improvements and the need to vacate encampments.

Betty Eskey stated that she is aware of a few people who reside in those areas of the Arroyo Simi, but there are rumors of more. In 2006 there were approximately 30 to 40 people residing in the Arroyo. She mentioned the number of requests for services to the Samaritan Center continue to go down. The Center continues to campaign about the negative effects of panhandling.

Michael Nigh stated that the Ventura County Housing Authority administers \$24 million dollars of Section 8 vouchers in Ventura County and \$7.8 million goes towards Simi Valley. Of the 760 vouchers being utilized in Ventura County, Simi Valley has the highest amount of voucher holders.

Howard Gobler inquired about the closure of the Oxnard Winter Warming Shelter and if it will directly affect the Simi Valley Public Action to Deliver Shelter (P.A.D.S.). It was explained that the closure of the Oxnard shelter should not affect Simi Valley since the P.A.D.S. sites are open only to Simi Valley residents.

Karol Schulkin stated that Oxnard and Ventura are working towards the possibility of opening their own smaller winter warming shelters.

8. Task Force Coordinator's Report: None

9. Adjournment: Thursday, November 12, 2015, 3:30 p.m.

By the consensus of the Task Force, the meeting was adjourned at 5:11 p.m.

Organization	Representative	Attendance P = Present; A = Absent
Area Housing Authority	Michael Nigh	P
Chamber of Commerce	John Tolson	P
City Council	Council Member Mike Judge	P
City Council	Council Member Keith Mashburn	P
Council On Aging	June-Marie von Osinski	P
County of Ventura Behavioral Health Department	Bob Gross	A
County of Ventura Homeless Services	Karol Schulkin	P
County of Ventura Human Services Agency	Latrell Herbert	A
County of Ventura Public Health Department	Michele Surber	A
County of Ventura Supervisor Peter Foy's Office	Brian Miller	P
Dinner Site	Toni Freeland	P
Faith Community	Kurt Fredrickson	A
Faith Community	Andy Mattick	P
Free Clinic of Simi Valley	Fred Bauermeister	P
Lutheran Social Services	Amanda Brian	A
Many Mansions	Alex Russell	A
Neighborhood Council # 1	Howard Gobler	P
Neighborhood Council # 2	Jonathan Perez	A
Neighborhood Council # 3	Avery West	P
Neighborhood Council # 4	Bob Powers	P
PADS	Christian Riehl	P
Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District	Theresa Pennington	A
Representative who has Experienced Homelessness	Chrissy Bowden for Colleen Abbinanti	P
Rotary Club of Simi Valley	Joe Lansden	A
Salvation Army	Mary Flandez	A
Samaritan Center	Betty Eskey	P
Simi Valley Hospital	Carla Orieta	A
Simi Valley Police Department	Stephanie Shannon	P
Simi Valley Unified School District	Bill Daniels	P
State Senator or Assemblyman	Marie Lakin	A
Youth Council	Nick Steinwender	A

CITY OF SIMI VALLEY • MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 5, 2015

TO: Task Force on Homelessness

FROM: Sommer Barwick, Director of Community Services

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF THE CONTINUATION OF THE TASK FORCE ON HOMELESSNESS

Following the August 13, 2015 Task Force on Homelessness meeting, a request was made to discuss the effectiveness of the Task Force on Homelessness, and if consideration should be given to the future of the Task Force, whether a recommendation should be made to the City Council to continue the Task Force in its present state, restructure the format and/or size, or disband the Task Force.

Background and Overview of the City's Task Force on Homelessness

In order to address homelessness in Simi Valley, on January 25, 1999, the City Council approved the formation of the Simi Valley Task Force on Homelessness that was comprised of public agencies and non-profit service groups to provide a venue to communicate the methods and best practices to prevent and reduce homelessness in Simi Valley. Representatives of the originally formed Task Force included 17 members as follows: two City Council appointees, three Community Members-At-Large, the Samaritan Center, Care and Share, PADS program, Dinner Site representative, Ventura County Mental Health, Employment Development Department/CalWorks, The Rotary Club of Simi Valley, Ventura County Homeless Services, Lutheran Social Services, Supervisor Judy Mikels' representative, Simi Valley Police Department Captain, and the Simi Valley Ministerial Association.

One of the first responsibilities of the Task Force was to establish the following guidelines for Simi Valley: 1) Analyze and evaluate the homeless problem in Simi Valley and the current status of services to the homeless; 2) Identify the agencies that are currently providing services, the level of services, and how these services are accessed by the homeless; 3) Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the County and other public agencies and non-profit service groups; and, 4) Develop a comprehensive list of strategies available to address the City's homeless population and forward recommendations to the City Council for consideration.

By December of that year, a Final Report that identified and recommended strategies to address homelessness in Simi Valley was approved by the City Council. The recommended strategies to address seven issues as the top categories affecting the homeless and near-homeless in Simi Valley included: 1) Housing, 2) Shelter/Transitional Housing, 3) Employment, 4) Mental/Physical Health, 5) Financing of Homeless Service Programs, 6) Community Education, and 7) Coordination of Services.

In 2007, the City made a commitment to the Ventura County 10-Year Strategy to End Homelessness. The Task Force on Homelessness approved recommendations including specific steps that Simi Valley service providers, faith-based organizations, businesses, the City, and the homeless themselves could take to prevent and reduce the incidence of homelessness in Simi Valley. In 2013, the Task Force reviewed the Ventura County Recalibrating for Results: A Five Year Evaluation and Update of the 2007-2017 County of Ventura Plan to End Homelessness. In response the Task Force forwarded eight recommendations to the City Council to continue to prevent and reduce the incidences of homelessness in the community.

At the February 7, 2014 Task Force meeting, an overview was provided about the accomplishments that the Simi Valley Task Force achieved from 1999 to 2013 (attached, page 11). Significant progress was achieved in the areas of health, employment, service coordinating and bringing regional services to Simi Valley. However, some of the original items, such as the lack of workforce housing, continue to be an issue within Simi Valley, and many other communities across the County.

Task Force on Homelessness Recent Activities and Accomplishments

Last year, the Task Force formed the Task Force on Homeless Subcommittee on Crime Reduction and Prevention. The Committee made a recommendation to form a program that incorporated targeted outreach to engage businesses in the **Business Watch program** with site inspections, collaborative communication efforts with the Simi Valley Chamber of Commerce and the Samaritan Center, community tips for business and patrons to handle criminal situations, and community education on Mental Health First Aid. The Committee also recommended the Proposed **Homeless Encampment Abatement Program and Coordinated Social Services Support** to increase engagement with available services. The Program was to allow the enforcement of the urban camping and trespassing laws while the winter warming shelters serve as a housing option and as a case management contact point. The recommendation was forwarded to the Task Force and then to City Council for authorization.

On July 21, 2014, the City Council authorized the Police Department to reduce the number of illegal encampments in Simi Valley. As a result, the Police Department Community Liaison Officers, The Samaritan Center, LSS Community Care Center (formally Lutheran Social Services), Ventura County Behavioral Health conducted extensive street outreach to over 20 different encampments to build relations and encourage homeless individuals to engage into services prior to the breakdown of the encampments. Out of the 20 locations, 28 homeless individuals were arrested and 15 agreed to engage in services. Presently, eight of the homeless individuals are receiving active case management with the Samaritan Center. Street outreach still continues with The Samaritan Center, Simi Valley Police Department, Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District Park Rangers, Ventura County Behavioral Health, and other service providers.

In order to streamline and improve services for individuals who are in need of referrals for health and human services, the Task Force recommended that the City strengthen its partnership with Ventura County 211 and discontinue the publication of the Directory of

Social Services. By strengthening our partnership and promoting **Ventura County 211**, individuals will have access to the most up to date information for referrals of services 24 hours a day. Staff is also in the process of updating brochures to give to the community about the different services available within the community.

The **Simi Valley Alliance to House the Homeless** has been meeting since 2007. The Alliance consists of Community Services staff, local and regional services providers, such as the Samaritan Center, Ventura County Behavioral Health, Simi Valley Unified School District, the Simi Valley Free Clinic, Simi Valley Police Department, and occasionally other local service providers to address homeless and identify and target the gaps in services. The Alliance has continued to work with homeless individuals through case management to house and maintain housing for homeless clients.

Since 1999, the Task Force has grown from 19 members to 31 members. These representatives presently include: two City Council Members, Area Housing Authority, Chamber of Commerce, Council On Aging, County of Ventura Behavioral Health Department, Council of Ventura Homeless Services, County of Ventura Public Health, County of Ventura Supervisor Foy's Office, Simi Valley Dinner Sites, two Faith Community Representatives, Free Clinic of Simi Valley, LSS Community Care, Many Mansions, four Neighborhood Council Representatives, PADS, Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District, a representative who experienced homelessness, Rotary Club of Simi Valley, Salvation Army, Samaritan Center, Simi Valley Hospital, Simi Valley Police Department, Simi Valley Unified School District, State Senator or Assembly Representative, and a Youth Council Representative.

Ventura County's Efforts to Reduce Homelessness

The Ventura County Continuum of Care (CoC) program is designed to promote communitywide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness; provide HUD funding for efforts by nonprofit providers, and State and local governments to quickly rehouse homeless individuals and families while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused to homeless individuals, families, and communities by homelessness; promote access to and effect utilization of mainstream programs by homeless individuals and families; and optimize self-sufficiency among individuals and families experiencing homelessness. The CoC is phasing in a Coordinated Entry System of homeless services countywide to help individuals and families get connected with the most appropriate services at point of entry into the system. With very limited resources, coordination of services is essential. The CoC continues to seek partnerships with all willing housing and services partners to build upon this system.

Community Services staff attends the quarterly CoC Alliance meetings and has provided updates to the Task Force about regional efforts. Currently, the CoC has four subcommittees that include: Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), Data, Housing and Services, and Public Information and Outreach Subcommittees. Community Services staff is currently participating on the Data, Housing and Services, and the Public Information and Outreach subcommittees to learn and help to facilitate the CoC efforts to

reduce homelessness in Simi Valley. The efforts of local Task Forces have made a significant contribution in addressing the regional issues of homelessness.

The National Alliance to End Homelessness hosted a System Design Clinic in October to look at the data within Ventura County's HMIS and gather information from consumers, providers and community leaders to evaluate the current system of delivery and to help create a plan for improving and building an effective homeless response system throughout Ventura County. Recently, new Board members for the CoC were assigned, including a representative from the City of Simi Valley. The Board members will provide policy and funding decisions for service organizations that apply for HUD funding. The City's Task Force on Homelessness is well positioned to provide policy guidance for the City CoC representative about the needs for Simi Valley.

Overview of Current Issues Impacting Homelessness

Many know that the Point in Time Counts provide a snapshot of homelessness in communities. In the 2014 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress, from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, California accounted for 20 percent (113,952 people) of the nation's homeless and experienced the largest decline in the number of people experiencing homelessness, 25,034 since 2007. However, in 2014 California had the highest percentage of homeless individuals counted in unsheltered locations that accounted for 71,437 people. According to the Ventura County 2015 Homeless Count and Subpopulation Survey, a total of 1,417 homeless individuals were counted in Ventura County. Of the 1,417 people counted, 460 (32%) were in temporary housing, and the majority, 957 people (67%), were on the streets. The 957 homeless individuals included 92 children, 65 youth ages 18-24 and 87 veterans of military service. Simi Valley had 202 homeless individuals counted, and continued to have the third highest homeless population in Ventura County. The highest spikes in homelessness occurred in 2009, with 303 homeless individuals counted and 284 individuals counted in 2012.

The overall downward trend of homelessness can be traced to the adoption of a housing first model among homeless service providers, to a focus on homeless prevention efforts, to rapidly rehousing specific clients, and to a focus on street outreach and engagement of chronically homeless persons. Collaboration among agencies, sharing of resources and information has had success in getting people off the streets and into housing. However, with the lack of housing infrastructure, homelessness and the risk of homelessness continue to be a crisis within Simi Valley, Ventura County, in California, and many parts of the United States.

Affordable Housing

According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, one of the biggest barriers to success and opportunity is that one in four families (11 million families) in this country spend more than half of their incomes on rent. These families are a paycheck or an unexpected expense away from not being able to make rent, and potentially needing to access shelters or other homeless services. The continued rise in rent seems to be directly

correlated to the spike in family homelessness that is seen in many places across the country.

From 2014 to 2018 the City will be losing 360 lower-income units. However, the City anticipates adding around 434 lower-income affordable units. These are projects that have already been approved, and are either in construction or unbuilt, as well as those projects that are in review. Assuming all the approved projects get built out and those in review get approved and built, Simi Valley will see a net gain of 74 Affordable Housing Units. However, residents who live in affordable units that have affordable agreements are facing the risk of losing affordable housing when these agreements expire. Due to long waiting lists and the uncertainty of the yet to be approved additional affordable housing, it is likely that the incidents of homelessness will increase in Simi Valley.

Ventura County's high cost housing market continues to be an issue with low vacancy rates that range from 1.5-3%. Over the last few months rents have reportedly increased rapidly and the lack of accessible affordable housing continues to diminish the progress of reducing homelessness. According to the Recalibrated 10 Year Strategy to End Homelessness in Ventura County, development of hundreds of additional housing units is required to maintain a viable living environment for the County. Willingness and collaboration of city and county governments is needed to approve projects for very affordable housing units. With the lack of affordable housing and the length of time to approve and construct affordable housing, creative housing options are being looked at by different groups across the county.

Summary

The formation of the Task Force on Homelessness was approved by the City Council January 25, 1999 to address the growing problem of homelessness. The Task Force identified and recommended strategies to address seven issues as the top categories affecting the homeless and near-homeless in Simi Valley that included: 1) Housing, 2) Shelter/Transitional Housing, 3) Employment, 4) Mental/Physical Health, 5) Financing of Homeless Service Programs, 6) Community Education, and 7) Coordination of Services. Since its formation, the Task Force has been instrumental in preventing and reducing the incidents of homelessness in Simi Valley. Significant accomplishments include, among others, increasing Simi Valley's access to regional services, establishing a Healthcare for the Homeless program, creating and distributing a Social Services Directory, forming the Simi Valley Alliance to House the Homeless, and most recently, the Encampment Abatement Program. Today, the Task Force consists of 31 members and provides a vehicle to communicate the methods and best practices to prevent and reduce homelessness in Simi Valley to the City Council.

Options/Potential Recommendations to the City Council

Many options are available for the Task Force on Homelessness to recommend to the City Council. Staff has listed a few options below to stimulate discussion. Other options could also be explored and/or recommended.

1. Maintain the current size and structure of the Task Force on Homelessness and continue with achieving the City's Adopted Goals (2013) associated with the County of Ventura's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness (attached, page 11);
2. Maintain the current size and structure and formulate new goals to recommend for City Council adoption;
3. Make a recommendation to the City Council to reduce the size of the Task Force to be more effective in achieving the City's Adopted Goals;
4. Make a recommendation to the City Council to disband the Task Force on Homelessness, and direct the Simi Valley Alliance to House the Homeless to continue their efforts to reduce and prevent the incidents homelessness in the community;
5. Recommend other options to the City Council.

Memo prepared by: Jennifer Santos, Management Analyst

Simi Valley Task Force on Homelessness 1999 to 2013

Since the appointment of the first Task Force on Homelessness in 1999, the services available in Simi Valley to assist the homeless and needy have increased significantly. These new services have been in addition to an impressive infrastructure of services that includes the Samaritan Center, the Public Action to Deliver Shelter (PADS) winter warming sites, the Dining Site Program, Free Clinic of Simi Valley, Salvation Army, and the many County, faith-based, and private local services.

The citizens of Simi Valley, local service organizations, and faith-based organizations have continually shown a generosity of spirit and eagerness to assist the homeless and needy.

Following is a list of services in Simi Valley that have been created or enhanced since the appointment of the Task Force on Homelessness.

Development of the *Directory of Services for the Homeless and Needy*, now re-named the *Directory of Social Services* – This comprehensive directory lists over 250 services available for the homeless and needy and is now available online. The document was conceived and created by the Simi Valley Task Force on Homelessness in 1999 as part of an effort to enhance access to and awareness of existing services. The document has been updated yearly and distributed to local service providers, schools, non-profits, government offices, police officers, faith-based organizations, and volunteers for the homeless. This document has empowered service providers by centralizing for easy access, accurate, comprehensive information on local and regional services available to assist the homeless and needy in the community.

Health Care for the Homeless, which is provided through the Ventura County Health Care Agency, began in 2002 with a federal Department of Health and Human Services grant and provides free medical services to the homeless, including tests, medication, and many previously unavailable services. These funded programs are accessed locally through the Sierra Vista Clinic. County staff is currently exploring a permanent location for a one-stop clinic in east Ventura County.

Affordable Housing – Over 300 affordable housing units have been constructed or are approved for construction in Simi Valley since 1999. The City also maintains contracts with local apartment complexes for over 1,200 apartment units that are affordable to low and very-low income renters, with over 900 of these units designated for seniors. In addition, the Area Housing Authority is currently funding 790 Section-8 Housing Vouchers that are used to supplement rents in Simi Valley. Of this total, 157 are provided to families, 376 to the elderly, and 257 to the disabled. Together, this represents a monthly rental assistance totaling \$652,459 or \$7,829,508 annually.

Transitional and Permanent Supportive Housing - In the area of transitional housing, the County, with the support of cities and many community groups and businesses funded the RAIN Project homeless shelter and the Casa de Esperanza transitional housing for the

mentally ill in Camarillo. Within the City of Simi Valley, Turning Point has added Appleton House, a six-bed transitional housing for the homeless mentally ill, and Many Mansions has opened Casa de Paz (14-units) and La Rahada (8-units) permanent supportive housing complexes for formerly homeless persons with disabilities. Additionally, Many Mansions is currently in development of the 12-unit Peppertree project in Simi Valley.

Funding for Programs and Services - Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been allocated by the City Council through Simi Valley's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Community Development Agency (CDA) process for programs, services and projects to benefit the homeless and low-income. City CDBG funds have been allocated to RAIN transitional housing, Appleton House, Food Share, Many Mansions, the Coalition to End Family Violence, Commission on Human Concerns Eviction Prevention, Senior Rental Assistance, PADS, the Samaritan Center, and other services and projects that assist the homeless or provide homeless prevention services.

The Samaritan Center, opened in 1994, provides services to the homeless five days a week including meals, showers, telephone, mail, clean clothes, and access to multiple services. For the last several years, the Samaritan Center has changed its focus from primarily offering services to the homeless, to facilitating the goal of helping the homeless obtain housing, with services that include extensive case management and a housing assistance program. In addition, the Samaritan Center advocates year-round for the needs of the homeless.

The Samaritan Center coordinates the **PADS winter warming shelter** from November 1 through March 31, and the community **Dining Site Program**, which provides a free hot meal 365 days of the year to anyone who is hungry. Both the PADS and Dining Site programs are provided through the volunteer efforts of many local churches and service organizations.

The **Salvation Army** assists those in need with clothing, utility assistance, and other social services and referrals, and provides a food bank that provides food year-round to hundreds of needy individuals and families.

Many **faith-based organizations** such as Cornerstone, New Hope Christian Fellowship, St. Rose of Lima, Our Savior Lutheran, Trinity Lutheran, Simi Valley Community Church, Shepherd of the Valley, United Methodist, and others provide outreach services to the homeless and needy, as well as assisting with the Dining Site Program and the PADS winter warming shelter.

The **Free Clinic of Simi Valley** provides free medical services on a first come, first served basis, and counseling and legal assistance to the City's low-income and those in need of assistance. In 2005, City staff helped facilitate the donation of five complete dental operatories to the Free Clinic of Simi Valley. In 2006, the Free Clinic of Simi Valley opened a needed and long awaited free Dental Clinic through a collaborative effort with the Simi Valley Unified School District. The dental services were added to the Free Clinic's existing impressive medical clinic services and enlarged and enhanced counseling services.

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is a HUD mandated system that has been adopted and implemented by most of the homeless service agencies in the County. The HMIS when fully implemented has the potential to provide an unduplicated count of the homeless using services in the County, simplify and improve services for the homeless by providing faster referrals and intake to services, and improve the availability of data on services provided to homeless people.

On a countywide basis, services for the mentally ill homeless have been greatly enhanced with the services funded by the Proposition 63 - **Mental Health Services Act (MHSA)**. Expanded MHSA services include the reinstatement of East County mental health crisis teams and the STAR assessment team, Behavioral Health Department's funding for integrated dual-diagnosis treatment, the Kinship Project, wellness programs, and increased funding for Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) vouchers.

The **Homeless Court** program is operated by the Ventura County Superior Court. Since 2002, the Homeless Court has rotated to three sites in Ventura County including the Samaritan Center to adjudicate homeless misdemeanor cases. The unique program facilitates better access to the court for those who do not have transportation, allows the homeless to clear their records, and reduces County court and processing costs.

The Community Foundation launched the **Alliance for Human Services**, also known as the "Under One Roof" Project in 2004. The goal of the Alliance for Human Services is to open a facility to house multiple charitable and human services agencies "under one roof" in the Simi Valley community. The "under one roof" project will provide families and individuals the convenience of access to human services all in one central location. Organizations that are housed in the facility will be provided with free or reduced rent, which will allow them to maximize their own fundraising dollars to offer clients greater services. The capital campaign for the "Under One Roof" Project is currently underway.

The City of Simi Valley developed a first of its kind pilot **Parking Citation** program to provide alternative sentencing that allows homeless individuals and those at-risk of homelessness, under certain circumstances, to perform community service in exchange for payment of City parking ticket fines.

Ventura County Animal Services assists homeless persons to care for their pets with dog licensing, vaccinations, and free weekly pet food distribution.

The Albertsons Fresh Rescue program now provides around 50,000 pounds of additional food items per month to assist local charities with their **Food Services** programs. Many faith organizations provide food pantries and prepared meals in addition to the Dining Site Program. The Senior Share Program at the Simi Valley Senior Center provides groceries weekly to low-income seniors.

Ventura County Health Care Agency consolidated and increased their services by moving Sierra Vista Clinic, Behavioral Health Services for children and adults, and Public Health into a new facility at Mountain Gate Plaza. Expanded services include primary care,

specialty care, radiology, laboratory, peer support groups, urgent care, and the ACE Program.

The **Simi Valley Alliance to the House the Homeless** was created in November 2007 to proactively reduce homelessness in Simi Valley and to date has been successful in doing so for over 430 individuals.

The County of Ventura Human Services Agency administers the **Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing (HPRP) program**, which provides extensive eviction and homelessness prevention services and grants to assist homeless persons and families to obtain rental housing.

The City has funded the **Simi Valley Emergency Assistance Fund** through two CDBG grants to Many Mansions and the Alliance to House the Homeless that is being used to assist homeless individuals to overcome barriers to housing and to help those who are at risk of losing their homes.

Community Services staff conducted a series of **roundtable discussion meetings** with local non-profit organizations, faith-based organizations, service providers, businesses, community groups, and Task Force members to foster understanding of available services, issues, and needs, to encourage the development of additional services, to strengthen local services, and to address gaps in services. Roundtables were held around the following topics: Businesses, Mental Health and Addictions, Housing, and the Faith Community. The Task Force continued the discussion and engagement of resource providers through public panel discussions around the topics of Healthcare Services, Substance Abuse Services, Mental Health Services, Veterans Services, Employment Services, and Housing Resources.

Furthermore, public education on the issues of homelessness have continued through the Task Force meetings and with the engagement of the faith community, the distribution of the **Resources to Assist the Hungry in Simi Valley**, and the development and promotion of **Call to Action – Steps to reduce and prevent homelessness in Simi Valley**. In response to the community perception of increased panhandling, a **Say No to Panhandling program** was developed by the Task Force that included a widely distributed public information brochure, and speaker presentations at local service clubs, and community groups. The **Say No to Panhandling** program was widely marketed again in 2013 with additional outreach through cable television ads, water bill inserts and direct outreach to businesses located in shopping centers with panhandling activity.

CITY OF SIMI VALLEY - MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 7, 2014

TO: Task Force on Homelessness

FROM: Sommer Barwick, Director of Community Services

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON TASK FORCE ON HOMELESSNESS COMMUNITY LEADERS FOR ADOPTED GOALS RELATED TO THE COUNTY OF VENTURA'S 10-YEAR PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS

At its November 14, 2013 meeting, the Task Force on Homelessness discussed and identified opportunities for community involvement associated with the following goals adopted by the City Council in July 2013, related to the *County of Ventura's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness*. To date, the community leaders following each opportunity have volunteered to champion the community efforts to accomplish these goals.

In order to effectively address the community issue of homelessness, additional volunteers will be sought by the community leaders, Task Force members and through City communication channels including the Task Force's email distribution list. It is anticipated that increased community involvement will continue to strengthen the collaboration among service providers and to further the prevention and reduction of homelessness in Simi Valley.

1. **Adopted Goal:** Discuss and develop goals and objectives for City Council consideration through the Task Force on Homelessness to assist community organizations in helping the homeless become housed.

Community Leader(s): Task Force on Homelessness

Status: On July 15, 2013, the City Council adopted goals recommended by the Task Force on Homelessness at its May 16, 2013 meeting. Additional goals and objectives may be discussed and proposed as needed. Opportunities for community involvement to accomplish each goal were identified at the November 14, 2013 Task Force meeting. Community leaders for each goal have been identified as follows.

2. **Adopted Goal:** Assign City staff to monitor and request United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding including developing a

collaborative to request Continuum of Care (CoC) funds to be directed to Simi Valley.

Community Leader(s): Task Force on Homelessness and City Staff

Status: City staff continues to use the City's e-notification for the Task Force to share information of interest and funding opportunities with service providers that serve Simi Valley. At its September 12, 2013 meeting, the Task Force created a collaborative to pursue establishing a veterans' home in Simi Valley and authorized staff to initiate future collaboratives, as needed. The veterans' home collaborative began discussions; however, the project was deemed financially unfeasible at the time.

3. **Adopted Goal:** Facilitate grant writing training for Simi Valley non-profit organizations.

Community Leader(s): Joanne Abruzzese, Fred Bauermeister

Status: Community leaders have been identified. Grant writing and other trainings are anticipated to be incorporated into the supportive structure for the Under One Roof project.

Opportunity: The Task Force can collaborate with non-profit organizations and services providers to facilitate grant writing training and other associated opportunities that may assist Simi Valley non-profit organizations in competing for limited funding resources. Trainings could be scheduled depending on availability and funding needed. Staff will assist in facilitating partnerships between non-profit organizations to leverage resources and further strengthen funding applications.

4. **Adopted Goal:** Make a concerted effort to ensure available County of Ventura funding is equitably dispersed through the County.

Community Leader(s): Rick Shroeder, Fred Bauermeister, Betty Eskey, City Staff

Status: Staff actively participates in the County's CoC and promotes a funding structure that allows for equity and a strategic approach to preventing and reducing homelessness. Fred Bauermeister and Betty Eskey were both seated on the CoC Board. For the FY 2013 funding cycle, the CoC Board decided that it would defund some renewal projects to better meet the needs of the community and to allow for new permanent supportive housing projects to be eligible for funding. The Board also decided that for future funding cycles projects would not be automatically renewed for funding to ensure that the CoC will remain competitive with its tier one and tier two allocations based HUD's funding criteria

for each funding cycle. The CoC Board indicated the future focus will be placed on permanent supportive housing and rapid rehousing. Transitional housing and supportive services only will not be funding priorities in future funding cycles.

Opportunity: Task Force and community members may participate in a number of subcommittees of the CoC.

5. **Adopted Goal:** Ensure that Simi Valley is represented at countywide organizations such as the Ventura County Homeless and Housing Coalition and the Continuum of Care Oversight Board.

Community Leader(s): Rick Shroeder, Mike Nigh, Fred Bauermeister, Betty Eskey, City Staff

Status: Task Force members Fred Bauermeister and Betty Eskey are current CoC Board members. Additionally, Mike Nigh of the Area Housing Authority of the County of Ventura is a CoC Board member. Rick Shroeder of Many Mansions is active in the CoC subcommittees and regional discussions. City staff continues to participate in the CoC.

Opportunity: Additional opportunities will be available for community participation as members of subcommittees and grant applicants. Staff will promote further participation through community outreach.

6. **Adopted Goal:** Collect and disperse information about available resources and programs to faith-based organizations, case managers, service clubs, and other community stake holders.

Community Leader(s): Kevin Dieckilman, Joanne Abruzzese, Kurt Frederickson, Andy Mattick, Toni Freeland, Jim Visage, Mary Flandez, Betty Eskey, René Frumkin, Fred Bauermeister, Rick Shroeder, Michele Surber, Theresa Pennington, City Staff

Status: Staff currently shares information through the City's website, e-notification system, targeted community outreach, and presentations to community organizations. Staff will continue to use these communication vehicles as appropriate. At its January 13, 2014 meeting, the City Council approved staff exploring a community banner program to provide education on panhandling. The City has continued its community education campaign related to panhandling with targeted press release for the holiday season, information available on the City's website, and announcements on Simi Valley Television. Mental Health First Aid trainings are being presented by Ventura County Behavioral Health through Mental Health Services Act funding and hosted by Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District (RSRPD). The trainings are free for attendees. RSRPD is in the process of reviewing its rules and conditions

governing the use of District parks and facilities and participation in District programs and continues to offer subsidized programming for low income and homeless families.

Opportunities:

Community At Large

A. Develop consistent messaging and talking points focused on educating the community about available resources, responsible giving, and impacts of donating to panhandlers and encourage the community to report illegal activity so it can be addressed through enforcement.

B. Promote community training for business, non-profit, and faith communities to help navigate disruptive situations and provide assistance to those in need of mental health services.

C. Explore a community banner program or poster campaign encouraging responsible giving and discouraging donations to panhandlers.

D. Promote connections between volunteers and non-profit organizations and encourage residential and commercial property owners who need assistance with improving their properties to meet acceptable standards.

E. Connect residential rental community with service providers for enhanced communication about available housing units.

Business Community

F. Identify properties adversely affected by panhandling and trespassing and conduct targeted outreach for crime prevention and planning design modifications and coordinate assistance.

G. Utilize Police volunteers to engage businesses to do crime prevention assessments.

H. Facilitate crime prevention workshops with the business community, including the Chamber of Commerce.

I. Partner with the business community, including the Chamber of Commerce to facilitate business forums to facilitate discussion among the business community to share successes and ideas.

Service Providers

J. Create a model for staff training that can be shared with the business, nonprofit, and faith communities to help diffuse disruptive situations.

K. Host service provider networking events to encourage collaboration and maximize impact of services.

L. Connect residential rental community with service providers for enhanced communication about available housing through local real estate associations.

M. Host faith community forums to identify community needs and share available resources.

N. Increase faith community outreach to provide support to community members who need assistance.

Community Facilities

O. Encourage and facilitate crime prevention plans for community facilities to reduce the impacts caused by homeless individuals and prevent urban camping or illegitimate use of the facilities including building improvements and/or enhancements.

P. Collaborate with the Rancho Simi Recreation Park and District and Simi Valley Unified School District to refine facility use policies to prevent illegitimate use of the facilities.

7. **Adopted Goal:** Advocate for improvements to discharge planning of homeless individuals to prevent the “dumping” of individuals into unstable health conditions and homelessness.

Community Leader(s): Michele Surber

Status: The Health Care for the Homeless program is currently exploring locations for a permanent clinic in east Ventura County.

Opportunity: Health care and service providers could strengthen collaboration and communication to identify resources and programs available to Simi Valley and provide updates to the Task Force as appropriate.

8. **Adopted Goal:** Continue to support the Simi Valley Community Foundation’s Under One Roof project.

Community Leader(s): City Council, Task Force on Homelessness, City Staff

Status: The City Council continues to support the Simi Valley Community Foundation’s Under One Roof project and recently executed a lease for the City’s Development Services Building to house its operations.