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COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

September 1, 2020

Honorable Michael J. Carrozzo
Presiding Judge
Santa Barbara Superior Court
County Courthouse
1100 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara CA 93101

Reference: Response to Santa Barbara Civil Grand Jury report titled, "Homelessness in Santa Barbara County" published June 19, 2020.

Judge Carrozzo:

Please find attached the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors (Board) response to the above referenced Civil Grand Jury Report. As directed by the Grand Jury, all responses are provided in accordance with Section 933.05 of the California Penal Code.

The Board appreciates the work conducted by the Community Services Department Housing and Community Development Division for their assistance in responding to this matter.

Sincerely,

Greg Hart, Chair
Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors

cc: Santa Barbara County Grand Jury

Introduction

In the Executive Summary of the 2018 Phase I Community Action Plan to Address Homelessness, the County acknowledges that homelessness is a significant and increasing concern not only for Santa Barbara County but also for the State as a whole. Factors contributing to homelessness include the high cost of housing, the scarcity of housing including affordable housing units, stagnant incomes and lack of living-wage employment opportunities. Coupled with inadequate levels of supportive services and need for adequate long-term supportive housing, these factors disproportionately impact chronically homeless individuals most needing these resources.

Such a complex, multi-faceted challenge facing the County, made even more difficult with the COVID-19 pandemic, calls for even greater levels of cooperation between the County, cities, community residents, governmental agencies, homeless housing and service providers, faith-based providers, health and mental health care providers, youth providers, Veterans providers, and LGBTQ+ providers. There are many successes to report, including the availability of additional State funding for services and housing, the availability several regional forums for community residents to become involved in helping address homelessness, such as meetings of the Santa Maria/Santa Barbara County Continuum of Care and the Elected Leaders Forum, a Coordinated Entry System, which provides a systematic way for homeless clients to enter the 'homeless services and housing delivery system' and find help using an organized approach, and an expansion of formal and informal collaboration. Improvements in data collection through the Homeless Management Information System provides demographic information, details on service needs as well as documenting changes in client income and benefits, and improvements in housing stability, retention and placement of those served in housing programs. These efforts are helping people access housing and services, which is the solution to homelessness.

In 2020, major housing developments including the Residences at Depot Street, Johnson Court and Garden on Hope have increased the number of units available for affordable, supportive housing.

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors Response to the Santa Barbara County Grand Jury 2019-20 Report "Homelessness in Santa Barbara County"

Finding 1

There is a need for greater transparency, understanding and accountability of homeless related expenditures and the results.

The Board of Supervisors disagrees with Finding 1. The County has provided numerous reports, PowerPoint presentations, community forums, where County homeless program expenditures and

results have been made available to the public. However, the County will redouble efforts at providing expenditure and outcome data to the public.

Recommendation 1a

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors direct the Santa Barbara County Community Services Department to publish an annual report of homeless related expenditures and outcomes.

Recommendation 1 will not be implemented because it is not warranted. Over the past three years, the County has led a very expansive community involvement process in the development of homeless strategies, the identification of programs and priorities, issuing Notices of Funding Availability (NOFAs), and overseeing grant allocation processes involving non-conflicted community representatives. In 2017, the County issued its Phase I Community Action Plan to Address Homelessness in Santa Barbara County, which included a discussion on funding awarded to community-based resources and interventions. In 2019 the County continued the community engagement process by facilitating the development of the Phase II Regional Action Plan to Address Homelessness, which provided a comprehensive analysis of gaps in available client beds and housing units by region, including cost to provide, and an implementation work plan, with strategies and goals.

In order to create another avenue for engaging the public and elected leaders in the dialogue on raising awareness and identifying solutions, in 2019 the County convened an Elected Leaders Forum on Homelessness, which has held three (3) public forums. The County’s CEO regularly meets with County department heads and staff to discuss homeless strategies during Homeless Interagency Policy Council meetings. The Council has developed a work plan to expand the availability of services and foster inter-departmental cooperation. Participating departments include Behavioral Wellness, Public Health, Sheriff, District Attorney, Probation, Public Defender, Planning and Development, County Counsel, General Services, Fire, Social Services, and Community Services. A COVID-19 Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Homeless Task Force and a COVID-19 Homeless/Housing Task Force, brought focus to the needs of homeless community members, and responses included establishing an interim North County congregate shelter in the Santa Maria gymnasium earlier this year, a non-congregate shelter program using State Roomkey funding, and creating mobile outreach teams to provides sanitation resources, electronic device charging, and field outreach to homeless encampments.

The County’s annual budget document available at: <http://countvofsb.org/ceo/2020.sbc>, provides a wide ranging summary of funding and countywide homeless related programs administered by County departments. This past April 2020, during the Budget Workshop, the County CEO’s office gave a presentation on homelessness, including resources and expenditures being implemented across county departments. Each year the Board of Supervisors receives a Report from the Homeless Death Review Team, which reviews the conditions and circumstances of deaths experienced by homeless community members. The County’s Community Services Department/Housing and Community Development Division’s Homeless Assistance Program provides periodic homeless related expenditure and accomplishment data through reports to the Board of

Supervisors, community forums, City Councils, and to the Santa Maria/Santa Barbara County Continuum of Care (CoC) general membership and their board of directors. All CoC general membership, CoC board, and committee meetings are open to the public. All CoC notices and documents are publicly available on the County’s website at <http://countyofsb.org/housing/homlessassistance/get-involved.sbc>. The County is committed to providing additional reporting on expenditures and accomplishments regarding funding used to address homelessness throughout the County.

Recommendation 1b

That the City Councils of Santa Barbara, Goleta, Santa Maria, Solvang, Buellton, Lompoc, Guadalupe, and Carpinteria publish an annual report of their homeless related expenditures and outcomes.

Answered by respective cities.

Finding 2

Permanent Supportive Housing for the most vulnerable homeless is lacking.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with this finding.

Recommendation 2

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors and the City Councils of Santa Barbara, Goleta, Santa Maria, Solvang, Buellton, Lompoc, Guadalupe, and Carpinteria develop plans and devise mechanisms for providing ways to build permanent supportive housing for our most vulnerable homeless populations.

The recommendation has been implemented for County of Santa Barbara. Santa Barbara County recently completed the Phase II Plan to Address Homeless, which contains estimates of the number of temporary beds, Rapid Re-housing slots, Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), and Long Term Subsidy slots needed, by geographic region of the County. The Phase II Plan also provides financial estimates on total cost to develop these beds and housing options. The County has pursued State funding sources for the development of additional PSH including Permanent Local Housing Assistance (PLHA) funding, No Place Like Home (NPLH), and Homekey Program funds.

Finding 3

State and federal funding that is granted to Santa Barbara County does not sufficiently support the mandate for housing the homeless.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with this finding.

Recommendation 3

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors and City Councils of Santa Barbara, Goleta, Santa Maria, Solvang, Buellton, Lompoc, Guadalupe, and Carpinteria identify funding mechanisms, including, but not limited to, bond issues, dedicated taxing, a designated budgetary line item and strong philanthropic partnerships, for housing the homeless.

The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not reasonable. The recommendation is not reasonable because greater analysis is needed and it is not reasonable to complete that analysis within the next 6 months. This recommendation may be considered in the future. The Board has consistently worked through its elected representatives to advocate for additional federal and state resources and to support affordable housing funding mechanisms, such as the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program. Given the current COVID-19 pandemic, the significant impact to the local economy, reductions in sales tax and other local revenues, and significant short term state and federal funding being made available to address health risk in the homeless population, staff may explore these funding mechanisms in the future.

Finding 4

Elected City and County leaders have not exhibited aggressive leadership in determining the availability of sites in their jurisdictions for housing the homeless.

The Board of Supervisors disagrees with this finding. The County developed a countywide map that shows the zones where emergency shelters and Low Barrier Navigation Centers (LBNC) are allowed “by right” (i.e., permitted without a conditional use permit, discretionary review/approval, or CEQA environmental review) pursuant to State and local regulations. For example, the County’s zoning ordinances allow emergency shelters in certain industrial, commercial, and high-density residential zones. On July 31, 2019, Governor Newsom approved Assembly Bill (AB) 101. In part, AB 101 requires the County to allow LBNCs as a use by right in “areas zoned for mixed use and nonresidential zones permitting multifamily uses,” provided the LBNCs meet specified requirements. (See Government Code §§ 65660 and 65662.)

Recommendation 4

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors, and City Councils of Santa Barbara, Goleta, Santa Maria, Solvang, Buellton, Lompoc, Guadalupe, and Carpinteria designate and facilitate building of housing for the homeless on sites within their jurisdictions.

This recommendation has been implemented for the County of Santa Barbara. The County’s development of a “by-right” zoning map identifies potential sites where projects may be located. This map is available at the following link: <https://arcg.is/1uKj9L>

The County will make this zoning map available, so that when the County’s Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) is issued by the County’s Community Services Department/Housing and Community Development Division (CSD/HCD) in the fall of 2020, affordable housing providers,

and community non-profit agencies can begin planning for the use of available and future funding for the development of housing for unhoused community residents.

Finding 5

A greater effort is needed to inform and include the public regarding the needs of the homeless for housing and services and how it can appropriately fit into neighborhoods.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with this finding.

Recommendation 5

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors, and City Councils of Santa Barbara, Goleta, Santa Maria, Solvang, Buellton, Lompoc, Guadalupe, and Carpinteria be more proactive in informing the public of the needs of the homeless for housing and services and how it can appropriately fit into neighborhoods by holding forums and conducting tours of existing facilities to educate the residents whose neighborhoods are proposed for the development of projects for the homeless.

This recommendation has been implemented for the County of Santa Barbara. A recommendation contained in the Phase II Regional Action Plan to Address Homelessness includes County staff presenting Phase II recommendations and work plan to the Board of Supervisors and each City Council, before 12/30/20. Community forums have been conducted as specific sites have been identified for potential development of projects for homeless community residents. Other community engagement strategies which have been successfully used include "virtual" tours of housing developments.

Finding 6

There are no elected leaders serving as voting members of the Santa Barbara County Continuum of Care Board.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with this Finding.

Recommendation 6

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors direct the Community Services Department to work with the Continuum of Care Board to develop a procedure for including elected leaders as voting members of the Continuum of Care Board.

The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not reasonable and not warranted. The State Government Code prohibits public officers – including City Councilmembers and County Supervisors – from holding two or more offices that are deemed "incompatible," including where there is a possibility of a significant clash of duties or loyalties. (See Government Code § 1099). This could potentially occur concerning grant awards as the Continuum of Care Board has decision making authority over grants for which local jurisdictions apply. The California Attorney General

has concluded in other cases that recusal does not insulate the involved officer from a potential violation of State law. Furthermore, in 2019, an Elected Leaders Forum was established in order for local elected representatives to periodically meet and discuss concerns in their respective jurisdictions on the homeless crisis, identify regional and local solutions, and establish priorities for available funding.

Finding 7

A conflict of interest exists within the membership of the Continuum of Care Board as the member organizations who seek funding for their projects are permitted to vote and grant funding for their own projects.

The Board of Supervisors disagrees with this finding. The Santa Maria/Santa Barbara County Continuum of Care (CoC) has policies and procedures in its Governance Charter which prohibits member organizations from voting on funding that could be awarded to their own projects. HUD regulations also impose conflict of interest requirements and these requirements are incorporated into the Charter and CoC operations.

Recommendation 7

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors direct the Community Services Department and the Santa Barbara County Counsel to work with the Continuum of Care Board to change the procedures for the voting process on the Continuum of Care Board to eliminate the perceived conflict of interest.

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. Not only has the CoC adopted a Governance Charter which expressly requires compliance with state and federal conflict of interest requirements and prohibits board members from voting on funding if they have a conflict of interest, the CoC has expanded the number of community representatives on its CoC board from 9-15 board members in 2015 to 27 board members in 2020. The expanded board enables the CoC to continue operating even if multiple members recuse themselves due to conflicts.

Finding 8

All overnight emergency shelters are at capacity year-round, there are not enough day centers, and there are currently no Navigation Centers in Santa Barbara County.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with this Finding.

Recommendation 8a

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors and the City Councils of Santa Barbara, Goleta, Santa Maria, Solvang, Buellton, Lompoc, Guadalupe, and Carpinteria work together to create overnight emergency shelters commensurate with their homeless populations.

This Recommendation requires further analysis, with recommendations to be provided to the Board of Supervisors by 12/30/20. Additional analysis is needed to explore the impact of COVID-19 on the spatial configuration of traditional overnight shelters, providing sufficient social distancing, and additional public health services. The Board of Supervisors has supported the development of the Phase II Regional Action Plan to Address Homelessness to create additional temporary/emergency shelter beds. The County has worked to expand the number of Safe Parking slots for vehicular homeless households, opened a temporary congregate shelter site in Santa Maria, and non-congregate shelter options in both North and South County for persons at-risk of COVID-19 complications.

Recommendation 8b

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors and the City Councils of Santa Barbara, Goleta, Santa Maria, Solvang, Buellton, Lompoc, Guadalupe, and Carpinteria work together to create day centers commensurate with their homeless populations.

This Recommendation will not be implemented because it is not reasonable. The implementation of day centers during the current health crisis will require additional planning to reduce potential transmission of COVID-19. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is not recommending unhoused populations gather or move throughout the community in order to reduce the risk of individuals coming in contact with COVID-19 positive community members. The Board of Supervisors may consider the creation of day centers in the future as a potential part of the County’s larger response to homelessness. Prior to the onset of the current COVID-19 pandemic, there were successful day centers in operation in the South County which could be replicated in other areas of the County and jurisdictions, when it becomes safe to do so again. The County currently provides mobile support centers and outreach programs to re-establish access to showers, device charging, food, and other critical supplies.

Recommendation 8c

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors and the City Councils of Santa Barbara, Goleta, Santa Maria, Solvang, Buellton, Lompoc, Guadalupe, and Carpinteria fund and expedite the development and opening of more shelters incorporating the Navigation Center concept.

This Recommendation require further analysis, with recommendations to be provided to the Board of Supervisors by 12/30/20. Additional analysis will include analyzing impact of COVID-19 on current best practices, such as the Navigation Center concept, appropriate design, configuration of shelter allowing for appropriate social distancing and availability of services. The County has established the development of the South County Navigation Center as a priority with recent State funding. The County has also submitted applications for State Homekey funding, which will create interim and permanent housing beds with Navigation Center services.

Finding 9

Currently, several California cities are providing temporary homeless facilities by utilizing alternative cost-effective forms of housing such as high-performance tension fabric structures, tiny houses, and modular housing.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with this Finding.

Recommendation 9

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors and the City Councils of Santa Barbara, Goleta, Santa Maria, Solvang, Buellton, Lompoc, Guadalupe, and Carpinteria undertake feasibility studies and develop plans for using alternate types of cost-effective forms of housing.

This Recommendation has been implemented. The Board of Supervisors has approved the implementation of a streamlined, interim process for accessory dwelling units and junior accessory dwelling units. See the information and links to other resources (e.g., application forms) at the Planning and Development's website regarding the permitting of accessory dwelling units and junior accessory dwelling units at <https://countyofsb.org/plndev/permitting/adu-jadu.sbc> (attachment provided). Other cost effective alternatives being considered are 'Tiny Homes' and modular construction. In 2018 the County's CEO office submitted a 'multidisciplinary approach to housing the most vulnerable homeless' in response to a countywide Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) Notice of Funding Availability. A key component of this multidisciplinary approach was a funding request to develop a 'Tiny Houses Village' project consisting of 10 units on County-owned land. Although the Tiny Houses Village project was ultimately not selected for funding, it remains a viable approach to housing.

Finding 10

Currently, in some California cities, large health care insurers are utilizing their tax credits to fund housing facilities for the chronically homeless.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with this Finding.

Recommendation 10

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors and City Councils of Santa Barbara, Goleta, Santa Maria, Solvang, Buellton, Lompoc, Guadalupe, and Carpinteria contact major health care insurers in their jurisdictions and encourage them to seek partnerships to support the construction of housing for the chronically homeless of Santa Barbara County.

This Recommendation is not reasonable at this time. The current pandemic crisis has put an inordinate strain on available health care resources for the near future. However, the Board of Supervisors may consider this recommendation as a potential part of the County's larger response to homelessness, including contacting major health insurers to support the financing and development of affordable housing.

Finding 11

Housing First’s wraparound services concept necessitates an increased staff-to-client ratio.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with this Finding

Recommendation 11

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors provide the Behavioral Wellness Department with additional continuous funding to ensure the needed staff-to-client ratios in the County supportive housing facilities.

The Recommendation requires further analysis, with recommendations provided to the Board of Supervisors by 12/30/20. The analysis will examine the availability of current and future resources to augment the Behavioral Wellness Department’s staff-to-client ratios for Housing First projects. This recommendation will be considered as the County develops its 2021-22 budget. However, the Behavioral Wellness currently provides a vast array of services to support the homeless community including outreach, case management and clinical interventions, linkages to community services, and short and long term safe and stable housing options.

The Department of Behavioral Wellness in conjunction with development partners collaborates to access state funds for the creation of new housing units focused on the homeless. As partners, the Department facilitates provision of case management services to residents in these units. Presently many of the services focused on housing retention are not consistently reimbursable by ongoing revenue sources and are supported instead with time limited grant funds. In the long term, the State Department of Health Care Services appears to be poised through the CalAIM initiative to expand the services for housing support that can be billed to Medi-Cal, however in the interim revenues such as grant or general funds needed for these residential units.



County of Santa Barbara Planning and Development

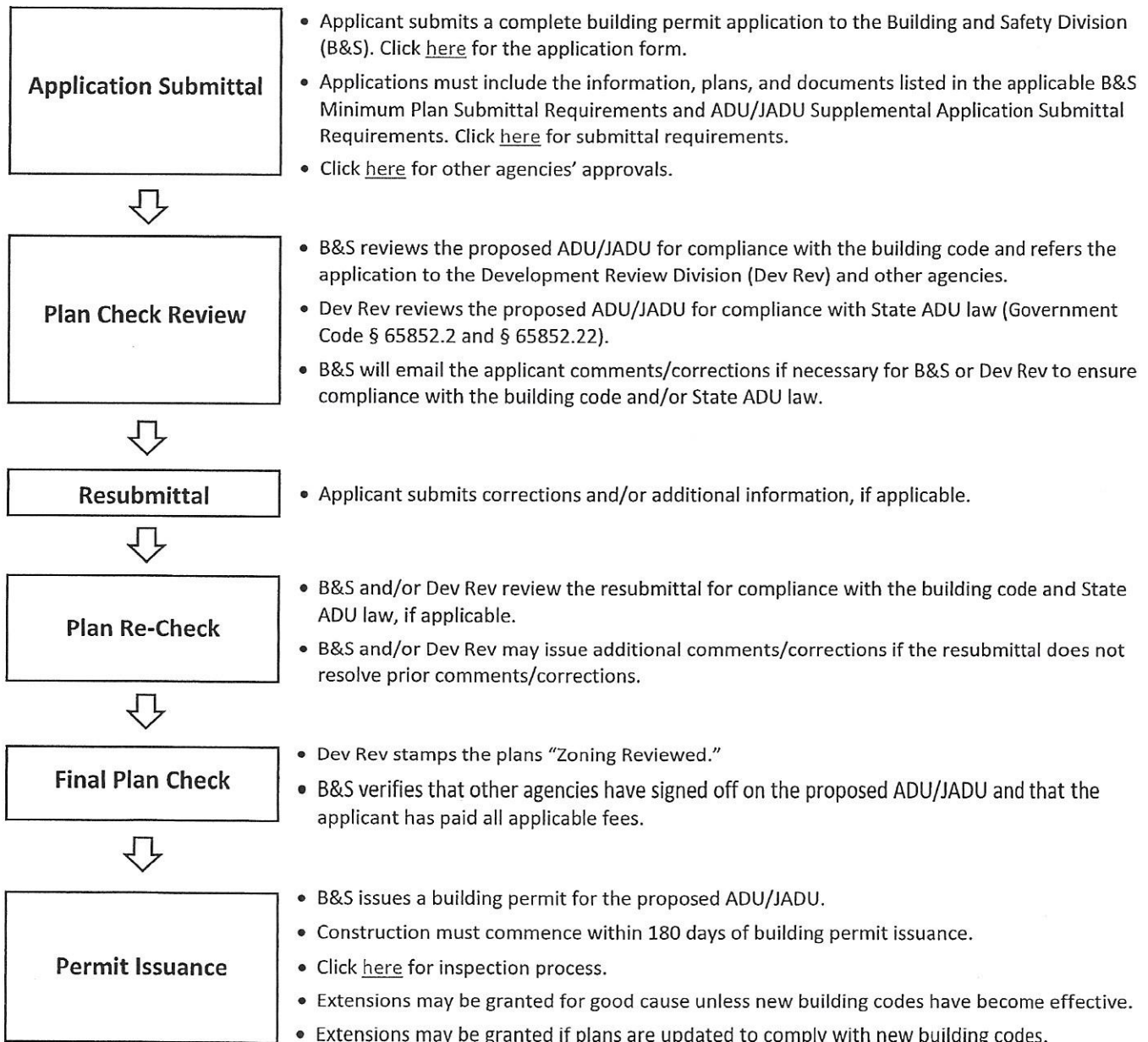
Lisa Plowman, Director

Jeff Wilson, Assistant Director

Steve Mason, Assistant Director

Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)/Junior ADU (JADU) Permit Process

Inland Area



DISCLAIMER: This flowchart is only intended to provide general guidance on the ADU/JADU permit process.