



1500 State Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
805.637.4124  
[clue@cluesb.org](mailto:clue@cluesb.org)

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May 10, 2012

Dear Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors,

CLUE Santa Barbara would like to express our support for the proposed merger of Bringing Our Community Home (The Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness), the Homeless Advisory Committees, and Common Ground Santa Barbara.

This merger of countywide homeless advisory bodies stands to significantly streamline and improve cross-sector coordination of homeless services in Santa Barbara County. This new model will ultimately benefit not only those in our communities struggling with homelessness, but also our entire citizenry, as we work in a coordinated and collective fashion to maximize resources, and solve the crisis of homelessness in our County. As the 2010-11 Grand Jury Report on Homeless Mentally Ill Indigent recidivism illustrates, there is an identified need for centralized coordination among public and non-profit resources in order to more effectively combat the poverty, mental and physical illness, and addiction issues at the root of chronic homelessness.

With the shared values of our faith traditions, CLUE is focused on working for economic justice in response to the needs of the marginalized without homes. As part of the proposed re-organization, we will be involved in this collaborative effort by participating in the Community Action Groups or providing input to the Leadership Council. We believe that the new structure establishes a clear avenue for members of the public and concerned advocates to provide direct input to policymakers at the Leadership Council meetings during public comment.

We urge you to take the necessary steps to make changes to existing ordinances or create new ones to codify this new structure; and to find matching funds in the coming fiscal cycle for the County's share to establish the centralized infrastructure and dedicated staffing for this effort.

Sincerely,

Maureen Earls  
CLUE Board of Directors