

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY BOARD AGENDA LETTER



Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
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Agenda Number:
Prepared on: 9/21/06
Department Name: Housing and Community Dev.
Department No.: 055
Agenda Date: 10/10/06
Placement: Administrative
Estimate Time: 45 minutes on 10/17/06
Continued Item: NO
If Yes, date from:

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Ron Cortez
Interim Director, Housing and Community Development

Dr. Jim Broderick
Director, Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Services

Kathy Gallagher
Director, Social Services

Dr. Elliot Schulman
Director, Public Health Department

STAFF CONTACT: Pat Gabel
HCD Housing Finance Division Manager

SUBJECT: 10-Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness

Recommendation:

That the Board of Supervisors: Set a hearing for October 17, 2006 to approve the Countywide Ten Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness.

Alignment with Board Strategic Plan:

The recommendation is primarily aligned with Goal No. 2. A Safe and Healthy Community in Which to Live, Work, and Visit.

Executive Summary and Discussion:

It is requested that the Board approve *Bringing Our Community Home: the Ten Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness Throughout Santa Barbara County* (the Plan). (A summary overview of the Plan is attached as Appendix A). Approval indicates that the Board will keep the Plan in mind when making social service and housing decisions, and will continue efforts to integrate homeless services and housing to enhance the effectiveness of the system. Approval also means that the Board will cultivate the public will to end chronic

homelessness so that the community can generate the additional assets from local, state and federal resources necessary to achieve this goal.

In response to community request and in alignment with a national initiative let by President Bush, on 4/19/05 the Board authorized the Housing and Community Development Department (HCD) to develop a Ten Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness. The Board also authorized HCD to hire a consultant to coordinate a countywide inter-governmental committee, including representatives from the cities of Santa Maria, Lompoc, Goleta and Santa Barbara, to create the Plan. Toward that end, HCD secured a grant from the State, and financial resources were also received from the cities of Carpinteria, Goleta, Lompoc, Santa Barbara, and Santa Maria. As a result, Santa Barbara County is joining the other 220 counties and cities across the country to end chronic homelessness.

This Plan represents an unprecedented collaboration of over one hundred community leaders both public and private throughout Santa Barbara County. Six county departments and a local private foundation contributed to this planning effort. HomeBase, Inc. was selected as the consulting firm to facilitate and prepare this community-based Plan. Participants focused on one of the most troubling, expensive and difficult societal challenges faced in this country and specifically our county: preventing and ending chronic homelessness in our communities.

For the past six months, the Leadership Council of the Plan has provided guidance and focused efforts on the prevention and the curtailment of chronic homelessness. The Leadership Council oversaw work done by six committees, each focusing on a different strategy to end chronic homelessness: Prevention, Outreach & Treatment, Supportive Housing, Increasing Incomes, Finance, and Oversight & Implementation. The Plan contains a chapter for each of these strategies where the goals, objectives, benchmarks and outcomes specific to each strategy are outlined. *On September 18, 2006 the Council unanimously adopted the Plan, putting into effect its introduction to the larger community.*

While initial efforts have begun, upon approval and release of *Bringing Our Community Home*, work will continue to collect data to better analyze our current system and develop a detailed plan that outlines specific activities, timelines, areas of focus, responsible entities, and initial measures of success. Yearly action plans will be developed and progress updates issued regularly. To assure that this is accomplished, a number of members of the Leadership Council and members of the six committees that worked to design this Plan have committed to continue meeting for at least the next six months, or until specific designees of these responsibilities are identified, to shepherd the Plan through the transitional phase from concept to implementation. Identifying funding for the Plan Campaign Coordinator and Fund Development Coordinator functions has been given a top priority and, through the Transition Committee, private resources are currently being solicited to secure these positions.

The Chronically Homeless are those individuals and families who both have a diagnosable disability and experience recurring homelessness. National studies show that while this population makes up 10-15% of the total homeless population, because of its recurring use of intensive, high cost care, it consumes 50% or more of the local resources spent on homeless services. These resources include emergency room and hospital care, shelter services, detoxification services, and psychiatric services. It also includes millions of dollars in our law enforcement agencies and fire department budgets.

The best way to end chronic homelessness is to prevent it in the first place. A major supposition of *Bringing Our Community Home* is that through the improved system integration, collaboration and resource allocation necessary to implement this Plan, a positive ripple-affect will result that will not only end chronic homelessness, but will decrease the incidence of all homelessness in our county.

Mandates and Service Levels:

None.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

No funding is being requested at this time. The approval of *Bringing Our Community Home: the Ten Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness Throughout Santa Barbara County* does not directly affect Santa Barbara County in a fiscal manner, although an approved Plan would place Santa Barbara County in a better position to receive new federal grants for permanent housing opportunities and service providers. There could be future financial implications during the implementation of the Plan; however, none are anticipated at this time and any decision with financial implications would be brought to the Board of Supervisors for review and approval.

cc: Leadership Council Members
Ten Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness

Attachment A