

TO: Honorable Mayor and Council Members
Attention: Laura C. Kuhn, City Manager

FROM: Cynthia W. Johnston, Housing and Redevelopment Director

SUBJECT: REPORT ON HOMELESSNESS IN VACAVILLE

DISCUSSION:

Last year, the City began the process of clearing and securing the property for the Intermodal Transit Center behind the Burlington Coat Factory (formerly Mervyn's). Before this could occur, approximately 20 homeless individuals, who were staying in tents on the site, needed to be removed. Many of these homeless persons were being served by local faith-based organizations through feeding and sheltering programs. About this same time, the City was receiving complaints regarding the number of homeless persons in the City, with varying concerns including removal to providing more services. Members of the faith-based community and local social service providers met with City staff to discuss homelessness issues. Some at the meeting, primarily representatives of the faith-based community, had established a rapport with some of the individuals and were willing to help facilitate the move. In addition to needing to clear and secure the property, the City's Camping Ordinance (Chapter 12.32 of the Municipal Code), prohibits the use of streets and public areas for camping purposes or storage of personal property, as it interferes with the rights of others to use these areas for which they were intended. Anyone found sleeping outdoors or in, on, or under any structure or thing not intended for human occupancy, is in violation of the Ordinance, which is a misdemeanor and is subject to a fine and/or imprisonment.

In March, 2009 staff presented the draft Strategic Plan to the City Council and suggested forming an Ad-Hoc Task Force on Homelessness. This Task Force was formed to discuss issues of homelessness with the faith-based and service providers (Attachment 1 -- Attendees and Contributors List). Due to issues in the Downtown area, a representative from the Downtown Business Improvement District (DVBID) was included. While the group was formed to assist with moving the homeless from the Intermodal Transit Center site, it began discussing other issues related to homelessness, panhandling, and day laborers within Vacaville.

The faith-based community provided great support and communication channels which led to the successful removal of the homeless campers from the Intermodal site. After this, the Ad-Hoc Task Force has coordinated several activities over this past year. Vacaville Social Services Corporation and The Father's House took the lead on "Project Connect," a one-day resource event, modeled after the highly successful Veterans Stand Down. Another activity was a survey of some of the homeless that the faith-based community interacts with on a regular basis. What was found in the survey was that many of the homeless persons in Vacaville were long-time residents, that graduated locally or have families who live in town.

Another issue being discussed by the Ad-Hoc Task Force is how to address inappropriate behaviors of some of the homeless in the downtown area. The behaviors are disturbing, inappropriate and not conducive to the activities that have been promoted to encourage use of the Town Square and shopping in the downtown area. This particular issue has been frustrating for the Task Force, as some of the behaviors, while disturbing, are not considered

“illegal” and are subject to first amendment rights under the constitution. The Vacaville Police Department has played a critical role in balancing appropriate versus constitutionally protected behaviors through this process.

A key part of the Task Force’s work over the past year has been the development of a report on homelessness in the Vacaville community. This report is based on a gathering of factual data along with the survey findings. The document was developed to serve as a resource to the community and the City Council regarding: (1) who are the homeless in Vacaville; (2) what do they need to be successful in order to reintegrate themselves into the community; and, (3) what options does the City have available to address issues created by homeless individuals.

A full copy of the Report is attached (Attachment 2), as well as an Executive Summary (Attachment 3). Some findings include the following:

- Characteristics of the homeless in Vacaville, including youth, families with children, Veterans and the elderly;
- Challenges facing the homeless, including affordable housing, problems with mental illness and addictions, and crime;
- Actual and potential costs to Vacaville;
- Existing resources for the homeless; and
- Potential solutions to gaps in resources, an anti-panhandling campaign, and how to change behaviors.

The Ad-Hoc Task Force identified several possibilities for action to address the gaps in resources for working with the homeless in Vacaville:

- Outreach: One-on-one outreach to the homeless has been a very successful way of connecting the homeless with services already in the community. Establishing ongoing partnerships with faith-based organizations will be critical to connect the homeless with services available and guiding them on how to utilize those services. As needed, the City can search for grant opportunities to support a liaison to coordinate these efforts.
- Housing: The report suggests exploring two sheltering programs. The first potential program is nomadic sheltering, sponsored by the faith-based organizations. This program involves transporting homeless individuals who are “clean and sober” to one of several churches where they could get a warm meal and be able to sleep for the night. The homeless would then be returned to the originating pick up location the next morning. The second program is a “Housing First” transitional housing program, to include supportive services (providing stable housing encourages the homeless to seek out and be successful in the utilization of services). One way to implement this concept would be for the City to lease out housing (funded by grants and Redevelopment moneys), to a faith-based organization(s) to coordinate on-site supportive services.
- Anti-Panhandling Campaign: Through a media and outreach campaign, the community would be educated about panhandling and learn that the only thing they are supporting by giving money to panhandlers is their ability to stay on the streets another day. A component that has been successful in other cities could be added to encourage citizens not to give their spare change to panhandlers directly, but rather donate them via strategically placed receptacles. The funds would be collected several times a year and given as grants to organizations providing direct services to the homeless, such as meals, clothing, etc. A

campaign of this nature would need a partnership, such as the Ad-Hoc Task Force to ensure its successful implementation.

- Changing Behaviors: It is estimated that a few of the chronically homeless individuals in Vacaville will continue to refuse services. These individuals need to be aware that the community will support their efforts to stabilize their lives through various opportunities and resources that are available, but at some point, these behaviors cannot continue. Key to this concept is ensuring access by Solano County Mobile Crisis to assist the homeless, but also looking at modifying City ordinances, working with the District Attorney's Office, and/or pursuing restraining orders (as appropriate).

One of the key strengths identified through the Task Force's process has been the cooperation between the faith-based community, social service organizations, and City partnership. In order for any of the potential solutions to be realized, Ad-Hoc members recognize it will require effort from the community and not the City alone. While it is believed that some of the homeless community are not willing to participate in formal housing programs, there may be avenues through long-term relationships and counseling that could better place these persons in permanent housing. Such a program could be funded by grants in the future.

Staff also sees the work of this group as having the potential to address one of the outstanding Housing Element requirements regarding housing for those who make less than 30% of the area-wide median income. Particularly, providing housing for groups that are of this very low-income bracket. The Housing Element is scheduled for a future City Council meeting and will address policies for this extremely low-income housing group.

Other issues that have been a problem for the City are the matter of panhandling and the collection of day laborers (particularly along East Monte Vista Avenue). These issues are protected under the First Amendment of the Constitution. Therefore, banning the activities altogether is not possible. The City Attorney's Office, along with the Police Department, has researched potential solutions to these issues. These will be addressed separately in a future report.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Receipt of the report does not impact the General Fund as no specific actions are recommended at this time. Redevelopment and State/Federal funds will be tapped for the development of future programs to fund a liaison position and/or to initiate any housing project, if directed by Council.

RECOMMENDATION:

By simple motion, that the Council accept the Report on Homelessness in Vacaville.

Attachments: 1 – Ad-Hoc Homeless Task Force Attendees and Contributors
2 – Report on Homelessness
3 -- Executive Summary

Ad-Hoc Homeless Task Force Regular Attendees and Contributors

Ana Isabel Montano, City of Vacaville, FIRST
Anne Putney, City of Vacaville, Department of Housing and Redevelopment
Becky Cruz, Solano County Office of Education
Bob Johnson, Vacaville Storehouse
Bob Vollmer, Downtown Vacaville Business Improvement District
Cheri Lincoln, Vacaville Unified School District
Cyndi Johnston, City of Vacaville, Department of Housing and Redevelopment
Daniel Bell, Advocate for the Homeless
Darren Paulson, Providence Community Church
Deena Davidson, Opportunity House
Dilenna Harris, City of Vacaville, Councilmember
Dr. Tom Smith, Crossroads Counseling
Emily Cantu, City of Vacaville, Department of Housing and Redevelopment
Jay Stoops, Abundant Life Ministries
John Fedota, Calvary Chapel
Joseph McElligott, City of Vacaville, Police Department
Laura Kuhn, City of Vacaville, City Manager
Patrick Stasio, Solano County, Health & Social Services
Randy Goodwin, Solano County, Health & Social Services
Tom McRee, Vacaville Church and Community Coalition
Rich Word, City of Vacaville, Police Department
Rod Halsey, Valley Church/Mission Solano
Shereene Wilkerson, Vacaville Unified School District
Sue Weiss, Travis Unified School District
Tyffany Wanberg, City of Vacaville, Department of Housing and Redevelopment

REPORT ON HOMELESSNESS

March 2010

On any given night, within the City limits, somewhere between 14 to 200 Vacaville residents don't have a bed of their own to sleep in. While the exact number of homeless Vacaville residents cannot be quantified, there are a number of reliable estimates, based on the efforts of those who serve this population. Many of these individuals have called Vacaville home for decades. The homeless in Vacaville are typically non-transient, but rather long-time residents who may have multiple barriers to securing permanent housing. This document attempts to define who the homeless in Vacaville are.

1. DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS

A. *Housing Industry's Definition of Homelessness*

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (1987) defines homelessness as individuals who:

- “Lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and...have a primary nighttime residency that is-
 - ✓ A supervised publicly or privately operated shelter, designed to provide temporary living accommodations;
 - ✓ An institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized, or
 - ✓ A public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.”

The McKinney-Vento Act defines homeless children and youth as:

- “Children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence,
 - ✓ And includes those who are sharing the housing of other persons due to a loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
 - ✓ Are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
 - ✓ Are living in emergency or transitional shelters;
 - ✓ Are abandoned in hospitals; or
 - ✓ Are awaiting foster care placement.
- Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings,
- Migratory children.”

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) interprets the McKinney-Vento Act to include only those who live on the streets or shelters, and those “who face imminent eviction (within a week) from a private dwelling or institution, and who have no subsequent residence, or resources to obtain housing.” HUD considers those who are “doubled-up,” or living with friends and relatives, as “precariously housed,” and not, by definition, homeless.

Other Definitions

Chronically homeless – A chronically homeless person is “an unaccompanied disabled individual who has been continuously homeless for over one year, or has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years.” A variety of homeless advocacy agencies indicate that this group of individuals has severe physical, mental, and/or substance related disabilities, and are resistant to services.

Episodically homeless - Episodically homeless individuals are considered to be persons who are in and out of shelters, may have mild mental health or substance abuse problems, are

more likely to participate in services, and have a better chance of finding stable housing than those who are chronically homeless.

Situationally homeless - Situationally homeless refers to those persons who are displaced by economic factors such as layoffs, job relocation, or other externally controlled circumstances. The “situationally” homeless are often living paycheck to paycheck, are willing to access services, and often are able to get back on their feet after a relatively short period of time.

B. Definition of Homelessness in Vacaville

The definition of homelessness that appears to best fit the City of Vacaville is a combination of all of the above. For the purposes of this document, homeless in the City of Vacaville will be anyone who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence including those who:

- Are living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations;
- Are living in a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

In addition to the above definition, Vacaville appears to have a large population of those who are “precariously housed.” They are defined as those who:

- Are sharing the housing of other persons (doubled-up) due to a loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
- Are at imminent risk of losing their home (within 1 month) whether it’s through eviction or foreclosure and have not been able to secure another residence.

While the precariously housed are not specifically addressed in this document, it is important to be aware of their existence, because without adequate resources, they may become tomorrow’s homeless.

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF VACAVILLE’S HOMELESS

The reasons for homelessness in Vacaville are many and impact a cross-section of the population. In general, the stereotypical homeless person tends to be that of males who sleep in dark alleys or in tent communities, and who choose to be homeless because they actually enjoy the “lifestyle” or don’t want to follow “the rules.” However, according to data collected by the Community Action Partnership (CAP) Solano, this stereotype is inaccurate as more and more of homeless are families that include women and children. In a letter dated November 18, 2009 Patrick Duterte, Director of Solano County Health & Social Services, stated “A more typical homeless profile is that of a single mother with one or two children, who was the victim of domestic violence.”

CAP Solano data further determined that, of 400 people observed across the county, 70 people (18%) had never been homeless before. Information provided by CAP Solano shows that across the county the number of newly homeless individuals has increased 30% over last year. While it is unknown exactly how many of the 400 are Vacaville residents, an increase has also been seen in Vacaville by faith-based organizations, social service agencies and various City departments.

There are limitations to data collection and analysis of the homeless for a variety of reasons, including lack of trust in the system, shame at finding oneself homeless, and the nature of transiency itself. The information in this paper is accurate to the best of our knowledge and to the extent that those who provided it were honest.

A. Homeless Population Estimates in Vacaville

The number of homeless individuals is difficult to count, and different groups have attempted to quantify the homeless population. Estimates of the total number of homeless in

Vacaville range from 14-200. These estimates include only those who meet the definition of homelessness in Vacaville stated previously.

The precariously housed, those living with friends or family, are also difficult to count. In this light, the only quantifiable data available is listed in Appendix A at the end of this paper. In addition to this data, there is other, more anecdotal information that can be found in Appendix B.

A final type of data was obtained during interviews with three formerly homeless Vacaville residents who estimated that there are approximately 20 individuals who live in the creeks or on the streets of Vacaville. They stated that the majority of these individuals are long-time Vacaville residents who have been homeless for many years. During one interview, Jennifer and John (names have been changed) stated that this group of individuals are close knit as they are long time friends and family who grew up in Vacaville.

While the exact number of homeless individuals is difficult to obtain, when the data is broken down into sub-groups, a better estimate of the population can be assessed.

i. Homeless Youth

The Travis Unified School District is currently working with eight homeless children in Vacaville. According to the Vacaville Unified School District (VUSD), there are another 50 children in their district who are considered homeless. The breakdown by age group and type of residency of these children can be found in Appendix C.

Anecdotally, there are approximately 5-6 youth, aged 15-19 years old, who currently sleep in the creek beds. The number in this group fluctuates depending on the day, but has been known to be as large as 11 youths. This group is comprised of runaways, those in foster care who have left the foster home without permission (a.w.o.l), emancipated foster youth, and pregnant and/or parenting teens. There are concerns as reports exist that parents visit their children at the creek and even bring food and other supplies to them but do not allow them to return home.

This group is especially vulnerable due to their age, experiences, and lack of resources. A major gap exists in services for youth who are not yet 18, or emancipated, and who cannot return home. This group cannot enter into a safe house or shelter because anyone under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent, legal guardian, etc. Some of these youth leave abusive or other desperate situations and cannot safely return home. The homeless foster youth often feel they do not even have a home to return to.

ii. Families & Children

As noted above, VUSD has found at least 50 children who are currently homeless, or precariously housed, in Vacaville. From July 1, 2008 to May 31, 2009, the Vacaville FIRST office worked with 50 families who needed housing assistance (68% of the homeless the FIRST office worked with during this same timeframe). Since January 1, 2009, the Vacaville Housing Counseling Center has worked with 114 adults with dependent children who are at imminent risk of becoming homeless.

iii. Those Persons Impacted by the Economy

According to the National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH), there is a significant increase in the number of homeless since the foreclosure crisis began in 2007. This rapid decline in the housing market has significantly impacted not only California, but more directly, Solano County and the City of Vacaville. From January 1-December 31, 2009, there were 1,224 default notices and 565 foreclosures in the City of Vacaville. This number is expected to grow as the housing market continues to see households unable to make their monthly mortgage payments, potentially increasing the number of homeless families.

In his November 18, 2009 letter, Patrick Duterte cited “continuing high unemployment levels, [and] continuing high levels of home foreclosures” as significant issues facing families throughout the county. He further stated that,

“Solano County has had one of the highest foreclosure rates in the nation, and the number of unemployed has more than doubled since the 2006-07 period, from 4.8

percent, in May 2007, to 11.7 percent in September 2009. The increase in unemployment has been particularly rapid over the past 12 months.”

Vacaville residents have been hit hard by this crisis as evidenced by the number of foreclosures, and those seeking assistance from the Vacaville Housing Counseling Center.

Of those who sought foreclosure counseling from the Vacaville Housing Counseling Center in 2009, 52 households either withdrew from counseling or lost their home due to foreclosure, and an additional 18 were preparing for foreclosure. It is unknown what happened to these families afterwards as attempts at follow up were unsuccessful. According to the City of Vacaville’s Foreclosure Counselor, the majority of the individuals seen are situationally homeless (by definition), most having never needed access to services before the downturn in the economy. Those who sought foreclosure counseling came from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds, further illustrating the fact that the foreclosure crisis and imminent risk of homelessness impacts a diverse cross-section of Vacaville’s population.

iv. Veterans

Often when thinking of the homeless, the stereotype is often adult males who are Veterans of the armed forces, particularly the Vietnam War. They are often perceived as enjoying the homeless lifestyle, and not willing to access services. However, statistics show that what has been traditionally believed is inaccurate:

- Bill Reardon of the Solano County Department of Veteran’s Services, and Patrick Stasio from Solano County Healthcare for the Homeless, report that only 30% of the adult male homeless population are Veterans. If these numbers are accurate, then approximately 39 males from the January 2009 survey fit the profile.
- CAP Solano found that only 8% of the total homeless population in Solano County is considered “Chronically homeless.” Based on this percentage, the January 2009 CAP Solano survey would mean that of the 400 observed, only 32 would be considered “chronically homeless” and even less would be Vacaville residents.

According to the NCH, homeless Veterans are more likely than housed Veterans to have served in combat. However, the perception that the majority of these combat Veterans served during the Vietnam era is inaccurate as the majority of homeless Veterans are from “the late-Vietnam and post-Vietnam era.” These veterans have “had little exposure to combat, but appear to have increased rates of mental illness and addiction disorders.” Their biggest challenges seem to be:

- Declining job opportunities;
- Stagnating wages; and
- Lack of affordable housing.

As of 1/21/10 there were 105 self-identified veterans and local residents on the Section 8 wait list in Vacaville. Of these:

- ✓ 48 are single males, or male head of household with no children,
- ✓ 22 are single females, or female head of household with no children; and
- ✓ 35 are families with minor children

v. Elderly

According to the NCH, a decline in affordable housing is a primary reason for the amount of elderly or near-elderly homeless, who are more likely to be on fixed incomes. The NCH cites a consensus between researchers that “persons aged 50 and over should be included in the ‘older homeless’ category.” Studies show that approximately 10.3% of the nation’s sheltered homeless are between 51 and 61 (near elderly), and that approximately 9.9% of people ages 65 and over live below the poverty level and are forced to live in shelters, or on the streets.

Of the individuals surveyed by CAP Solano, 71 (25%) were in the 51 and over age bracket. Like all other data regarding the homeless in Vacaville, the number of those who are over 51 years old is scarce, so national and county-wide trends are about the only sources currently available. However, the Vacaville Housing Authority's (VHA) Section 8 wait list can shed some light in this area. It currently has 247 applicants self-identified as being both local residents and aged 62 and older. Of these, 67% have income at or below the poverty level, which is currently \$16,650 annually for a single-person household.

During an interview of a portion of homeless individuals conducted by a collaboration of several local faith-based organizations in April 2009, there was a significant number of individuals who were 55 and over. Of the 22 interviewed, 23% were over age 55. The average age of the entire group was 45 years old. Many of the individuals interviewed will be 55 and over within the next 5-10 years. Many of those individuals who are over age 55 have also been homeless for a significant period of time, anywhere from 3 months to 18 years.

3. CHALLENGES

As part of the preparation of this document, City staff interviewed three formerly homeless individuals, Jennifer, John and Jim. Through these interviews, it became clear that the homeless population in Vacaville faces challenges. All three stated that the homeless, specifically the "chronically homeless," not only struggle for daily survival, but that the majority of the homeless individuals they know are addicted to substances, and that all of them have some level of mental illness. Jennifer and John described their own life stories and how in their case, the loss of a loved one and the loss of a job started a downward spiral into depression, addiction, and eventual homelessness.

A. Affordable Housing

There are several barriers the homeless face in obtaining adequate housing, including adequate inventory and rental criteria. While Vacaville has a good supply of affordable housing stock, there are always more families in need of affordable housing than there are affordable housing units. Often times affordable housing communities have lengthy wait lists to secure one of their apartments. When a unit does become available, persons who are homeless face the second and more difficult hurdle – meeting rental criteria.

Affordable housing communities have criteria an applicant must meet in order to be accepted as a tenant, just like market rate communities. The most important is a steady source of income, which many homeless persons do not have. As indicated by the April 2009 survey conducted by the faith-based collaboration, some of the individuals were receiving Supplemental Security Income from the Social Security Administration, but these monthly checks are often not sufficient to cover the rent. If the homeless individual is lucky and has the income, they also have to pass a credit and rental history check, which can also be an issue. Finally, many affordable housing communities conduct criminal background screen, and as noted in Section D "Crime" below, many homeless individuals may not pass this screening process.

B. Addiction Disorders

Undeniably some homeless turn to alcohol and/or drugs, but what is unclear is whether the addictions were the cause of the homelessness or the result of it. The NCH indicates that "most drug and alcohol addicts never become homeless. However, people who are poor and addicted are clearly at increased risk. Another important aspect to consider is that many addiction issues arise while people are experiencing homelessness, rather than causing them to become homeless."

While there is little verifiable data regarding the prevalence of addiction disorders in the homeless population in Vacaville, national data suggests that "approximately 9.6% of the homeless with children are dealing with issues of substance abuse, while 37.1% of homeless individuals are dealing with these issues." If national trends were translated to the homeless in Vacaville, then based on a probable homeless population of 14-200, up to 74 individuals could be struggling with addiction disorders.

John and Jim both stated that the preferred drug of choice on the Vacaville streets is alcohol. They stated that methamphetamine is the second most prevalent, with marijuana third. Both men stated that, most commonly, alcohol is used to help homeless individuals feel better and cope with life.

To shed further light on what addiction looks like in Vacaville, the Vacaville Police Department (VVPD) provided information related to crimes committed by reportedly homeless individuals. Of the 782 crimes recorded from 2007-2008 that were reported as being committed by those defined by VVPD as transient (see Section C below), 175 (or 22%) were drug and/or alcohol related. The top four drug and alcohol related crimes included possession of an open container, paraphernalia, possession of drugs and being under the influence of a drug. See Appendix D for a breakdown of some of the most frequently committed crimes.

In the April 2009 faith-based interview, 11 of the 22 (50%) people surveyed acknowledged having a substance abuse problem.

There exists a common misperception that homeless addicts do not want to change their lifestyle. The NCH stated that “many homeless persons with addictive disorders desire to overcome their disease. However, the combination of the homeless condition itself and a service system ill-equipped to respond to these diseases essentially bars their access to treatment services and recovery supports.” John and Jim stated that, for a while, they did not want to change their lifestyles, but due to the outreach of the faith-based community, they came to the point in their lives where they not only wanted to change their lives, but had the support and ability to do so.

Both John and Jim admitted to using alcohol while on the streets, and acknowledged their addiction. In separate interviews, both men said the same thing, that part of the reason they became homeless was due to a lack of support during difficult times, and that it was the friendship, love and support of the faith-based community that brought them out of those dark days.

C. Mental Illness

Of the 22 homeless Vacaville residents interviewed in April 2009, 11 (50%) also reported having a mental health diagnosis (not necessarily the same 11 who reported substance abuse issues). Self-reported diagnoses ranged from depression to schizophrenia. Of the 11, only 3 indicated they were receiving treatment (taking medication or receiving therapy), and 6 of them reported having some type of health insurance. Of the 3 receiving treatment, 2 have health insurance. Because these diagnoses were self-reported, their accuracy cannot be verified.

More extensive data about the prevalence of mental illness within the Vacaville homeless population is not available. There are significant limitations in the collection of this data, including strict laws governing medical records, the transient nature of the population, the lack of trust in “the system” and the accuracy of the individual’s understanding of their diagnosis. National data suggests that “7.9% of the homeless population of individuals in a family suffer from some type of mental illness. Additionally, 22.4% of the homeless individuals...have a mental illness.”

During the interview with Jennifer and John, they stated they believe all the homeless individuals they know have some mental health issues. Jennifer and John believe that for many of them, the issues may be a result of deep depression due to the circumstances that led to being homeless or as a result of being homeless. However, they also know of individuals who they believe to have severe mental health issues, specifically schizophrenia, and they believe that these individuals’ mental health is their main barrier to finding adequate housing or accessing services. When asked what can be done to help these individuals, both John and Jennifer responded that forcing them into treatment was the answer. John went one step further and stated that even if it required 6 months of incarceration, medication and therapy, he felt these individuals could be successful.

At a meeting held on December 10, 2009 with Ron Marlette, Director of Mission Solano, he shared the same opinion. He stated that the “chronically homeless” who are addicted or

mentally ill, and who refuse to either get clean or start treatment must understand their behavior can have repercussions. He indicated that city officials could review existing ordinances to see if they can be modified so that these individuals know their negative behaviors associated with either the addiction or mental illness will not be tolerated. Mr. Marlette continued that homeless persons would then have the choice to seek services or be incarcerated.

A prime example of this is “Jane”. Jane appears to have mental health issues, but refuses to accept offers of help in seeking services. She is loud and offensive in public places, particularly in the downtown area, and makes shoppers and diners uncomfortable. While she is belligerent, she has not done anything that indicates she is a threat to herself or others, and therefore cannot be taken into custody. As long as Jane continues to demonstrate these behaviors, she will face challenges in obtaining and maintaining permanent housing.

D. Crime

Accurate statistics related to crimes committed by the homeless are hard to obtain because it is difficult to determine when someone is arrested if the person is actually homeless or if they are providing false or otherwise inaccurate information. Police records are based on what individuals report at the time of booking, meaning someone may say he or she is homeless because the person does not want authorities to know where they’re living. In addition, VVPD’s standard for being transient is living in a place where they cannot receive mail, different than the housing industry’s definition of homeless.

VVPD does make efforts to determine whether or not arrested individuals have a Vacaville address, but there are limitations to the VVPD’s ability to tie individuals to specific addresses. In some instances, the person may be homeless, but not staying in Vacaville, or may be truly transient and just passing through. Additionally, since our definition of homelessness also includes those who are precariously housed, it is impossible to pin down the exact number of crimes committed by Vacaville’s homeless population.

The VVPD reported that from January 2007-December 2008, there were 782 crimes that were allegedly committed by the transient population during the reporting period, meaning the individuals arrested (507 individuals total) met VVPD’s standard of being transient. 130 of these individuals were only contacted once, while 408 were contacted more than once but less than 12 times.

There were 75 individuals who were contacted more than 12 times by the VVPD during the two year reporting period. Of those “top 75,” the average person was contacted 22 times, and arrested an average of 6 times. The individual who was contacted the most times interacted with the VVPD 48 times, and was arrested 10 of those times. The top three alleged crimes during January 2007-December 2008 by the reportedly transient population included disorderly conduct, warrant arrests and unlawful camping. See Appendices E and F for a breakdown of the most frequently committed crimes.

During the interview with Jennifer and John, they stated that they believed crimes committed by those living on the streets of Vacaville are typically limited to those for “daily survival”. These include shoplifting and panhandling. They acknowledged their own interactions with the VVPD due to behaviors resulting from intoxication, such as disorderly conduct, possession, and fighting. However, they stated that in their experiences, most of the fighting was amongst themselves and did not involve other members of the community. In fact, people who were involved in robberies, home invasions and other property type crimes actually were housed individuals who had a place to store the stolen goods. These individuals were most likely staying with friends and relatives who also engaged in these activities

Jim’s experiences were similar, but in addition to witnessing crimes of “daily survival”, he also saw violence related to drugs and alcohol. He acknowledged that most of the violence he witnessed was between homeless individuals and was usually over money, drugs, or alcohol.

4. THE COST OF HOMELESSNESS

There is a fiscal cost to the City for responding to and addressing the issues caused by homeless individuals. The VVPD estimates that it costs \$672 per arrest for a homeless person. From January 2007-December 2008, there were a total of 782 arrests of transient, or potentially homeless, individuals in Vacaville. This amounts to an average of \$262,752 per year spent on simply arresting homeless individuals during the 2 year period. See Appendix G for a table of other average costs reported by the VVPD that are associated with crimes committed by homeless individuals.

There are other financial costs to the City that are not reflected in the VVPD estimates. The Vacaville Fire Department does not have available data on the costs they incur when responding to incidents involving homeless individuals, but it is reasonable to assume that they do spend a significant amount of money in staff response time, transportation and treatment of injured or ill homeless individuals.

The cost to the community continues with the expense of cleaning up homeless encampments and illegal dumping. The Vacaville Department of Housing and Redevelopment (DHR) spends staff time working with private landowners to ensure clean up of properties where the homeless have camped. There is additional staff time spent by DHR, as well as other City departments such as VVPD or Public Works, to clean up public property.

One cost that cannot be measured is the effect on Downtown and local businesses where the homeless congregate. Downtown business owners report problems with homeless individuals, such as Jane, who deter potential customers with their often bizarre and inappropriate behaviors. While Downtown businesses suffer in lack of revenue and loss of return clientele, the effect is also felt in the City budget as sales tax revenues decline. Unfortunately, the impact this has to Downtown Vacaville or business revenue cannot be determined.

5. SOLUTIONS

A. Resources

There are many organizations in the community that are already providing, or are willing to provide, crucial services to the homeless. They include the following:

- **Faith-based Food Services**

- 1st, 2nd and 5th Wednesdays, Chef Daniel, in conjunction with The Father's House, feeds the homeless
- 3rd Wednesday-Mary Ann Klontz and family (The Father's House members), feeds the homeless
- 4th Wednesday-Discovery Church feeds the homeless
- Friday Dinners-Episcopalian Church on the corner of Buck Ave. and West St. feed the homeless
- 3rd Saturday-Abundant Life Ministries provides a sack lunch and also provides clothing, toiletries and various items as needed
- 3rd and 5th Sundays at Andrews Park, Dean and Eileen Laung and family (members of The Father's House), feed lunch to the homeless
- 1st Sunday-Calvary Chapel provides lunch. Calvary Chapel also provides transportation services as needed, and assists with lunches through The Father's House
- 2nd Sunday-Providence Church paired with Rolling Hills Church provides lunch to the homeless
- 4th Sunday-Valley Church's youth group provides lunch to the homeless
- Vaca FISH provides food to those in need

- Vacaville Storehouse, operated by The Father's House, provides food and clothing
- **Mental Health Services**
 - Dr. Tom Smith (psy#22707) 125 N Lincoln St Suite H, Dixon, CA 95620
 - Solano County Mental Health Mobile Crisis Unit (707) 448-1131
- **Housing Services**
 - Opportunity House
 - Transitional housing
 - Life skills training
 - Spiritual group
 - House meetings
 - Credit Repair
 - Meals

In addition, Opportunity House is currently working with the City of Vacaville, Vacaville Social Services Corporation (VSSC), and Vacaville Community Housing to relocate and expand its services. Once completed, the new shelter will have 48 beds. The facility will continue to be operated by VSSC.

- Vacaville Community Housing
- Bay Development
- Twin Oaks (subsidized apartments)
- Autumn Leaves (subsidized apartments)
- Vacaville Housing Authority-Section 8
- Vacaville Community Welfare Association Emergency Vouchers
- **Substance Abuse Services**
 - Celebrate Recovery
 - Alcoholics Anonymous
 - Narcotics Anonymous
- **City of Vacaville Services**
 - VVPD FIRST/FRC Resources
 - Case Management Services
 - Basic needs referrals
 - Current Job listings- every Monday by 9:30 a.m.
 - Resume Assistance/ computer available for job searching/ email for employment leads
 - Emergency vouchers for food/lodging and/or prescription
 - Information and Referrals for services
 - Domestic Violence Prevention and Education
 - Restraining order assistance and court support
 - Elder Services

- Parenting classes, instead of home visiting parents are welcomed to meet with a worker in the office (must have a child 0-5)
- **Veteran's Services**
 - Solano County Public Guardian's Office
 - Fiduciary Services-provide monthly income management services to veterans.
 - Receive monthly income & provide budgeting.
 - Solano County Department of Veterans Affairs
 - Solano County Health Care for the Homeless
 - Satellite Clinics in Fairfield, Vallejo and Rio Vista
 - Health Services
 - VA Assistance
 - Assistance with CMSP applications
 - Obtaining VA DD-214
 - Reduced fee for ID's
- **Supportive Services**
 - Solano Church & Community Coalition
 - Training and support for social/human services organizations
 - Crossroads Christian Church and The Father's House
 - Addiction recovery programs

B. Gaps and Filling Them

With unemployment rates in California at over 10%, families in Vacaville are continuing to face foreclosure. Add to that an ongoing decline in the job market, and it appears that homelessness in Vacaville will continue to present challenges for faith-based and non-profit organizations, as well as government agencies, well into the future. There is already an existing homeless population that needs the help of the community. While action is required, caution must be taken to not deplete an already strained system. So what comes next? There are several possibilities.

i. Outreach

During the interviews with Jim, John and Jennifer, they talked about the efforts of the faith-based community to reach out to the homeless, and some of the success they have had by providing non-judgmental support. Few, if any, social service agencies have the ability to conduct one-on-one outreach like this, so establishing ongoing partnerships with the faith-based organizations will be critical to reach out to the homeless to ensure they are aware, and hopefully take advantage of, the services that are available to them to assist in stabilizing their situations and returning to society. The City will also search for grant opportunities where funding would support a liaison to coordinate these efforts.

ii. Housing

Some of the current outreach strategies include proposals by the faith-based community to implement two different sheltering programs, one being a nomadic shelter and the other being a program similar to the "Housing First" model. Under the nomadic sheltering program, those homeless individuals who are clean and sober may board a bus that would take them to one of several churches where they could get a warm meal and sleep for the night. The next morning, the bus would return them to the pick up location. The second program would be similar to Housing First, where transitional housing would be available as the foundation of

stabilization efforts that would also include the availability of supportive services to address mental illness and addictions.

iii. Anti-Panhandling Campaign

Ron Marlette stated that the community at large needs to be engaged in the process of helping this target population to help themselves. For example, he discussed a San Francisco public education campaign that showed how giving spare change, food and other items to the homeless who panhandle actually encouraged their homeless behavior and did not help them seek adequate housing and stabilizing situations. This campaign encouraged the public to not give to a panhandler, but rather make donations to organizations that provide services to the homeless.

The City is currently reviewing how it can regulate panhandling activities to minimize their impact on the community, as the activity is protected under free speech and cannot be completely eliminated. In addition, a community-wide education campaign and strategy similar to that of Santa Monica's Dolphin Change Program, or the Parking Meter Program that has been adopted by several large cities, including San Francisco and Denver, could have a positive impact in Vacaville. In both of these programs, the community is educated about the fact that the only thing they are supporting by giving money to panhandlers is their ability to stay on the streets another day. They encourage citizens not to give their spare change to panhandlers directly, but rather donate them via strategically placed Dolphin Statues or revamped Parking Meters. Current programs place these receptacles in areas where panhandling is the heaviest, and the funds are collected several times a year and divided among organizations providing direct services to the homeless, such as meals, clothing, etc., in the form of grants. According to reports, these efforts have had a positive impact on reducing the number of panhandlers in those areas.

iv. Changing the Behaviors

It is anticipated that the situationally homeless and many of the episodic and chronic homeless in Vacaville will seek services. However, it is possible, even probable, that a few of the chronically homeless individuals in Vacaville will continue to refuse services. For example, services have been offered to individuals such as Jane, who harasses people and disrupts their right to peaceful use of facilities intended for business and recreation. These individuals need to be aware that this community will support their efforts to stabilize their lives, but that they cannot continue the way they have been.

There are several potential methods to address the behaviors demonstrated by these individuals. The simplest would be for anyone, even members of the general public, to contact Mobile Crisis. This service is provided by the Solano County Department of Mental Health and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Once contacted, Mobile Crisis will come out to do an assessment, and if it is determined that the homeless person meets the criteria, he or she will receive services. However, this alone most likely will not resolve the issues for several reasons. First and foremost, the person might be gone by the time Mobile Crisis arrives. If the person is still there, there is no certainty that the person has a mental health issue, and even if he or she is diagnosed and receives medication, the person may not take the medication consistently.

Calling the police and having the individual arrested when warranted is another possible tool. Many people are reluctant to do this, but it may be necessary in order to change the unacceptable behaviors being demonstrated by some of the homeless. This theory is supported by Jennifer, John and Jim, as they believed a period of incarceration would be beneficial to some homeless persons for purposes of detoxification and mental health diagnosis. However, it is not possible to know that persons arrested will be detained at the Jail for any period of time. The arrest alone, however, could cause a change in some behavior problems.

In order for more arrests to be possible, some City Ordinances would need to be revised to place legally allowable limitations on panhandling as noted above. Federal law would prohibit outright bans on panhandling, but some cities have been successful by diverting funds to non-profits. This could provide for a more beneficial distribution of the funds so that panhandler's

homeless lifestyles are not maintained and thereby creating the necessity to seek services that would help get these homeless individuals into a more stabilized situation and off the streets.

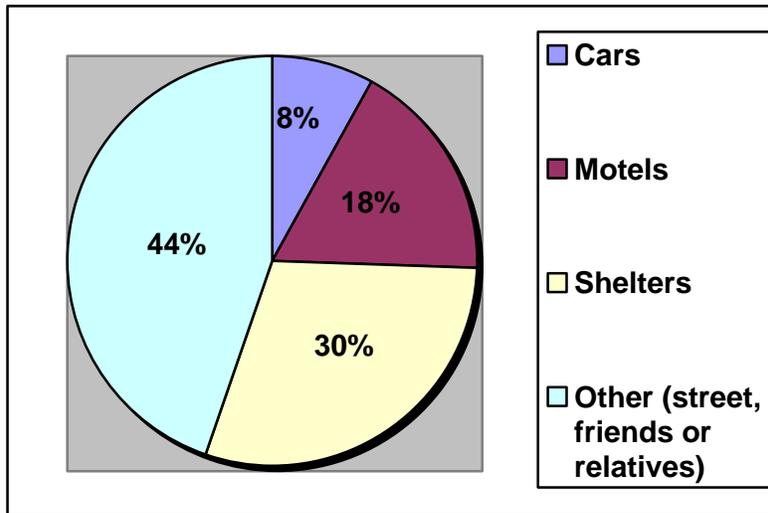
While arrests can currently be made for violation of the City's camping and other Ordinances, the District Attorney's Office does not typically prosecute these crimes. This makes it difficult to ensure prosecution, but at the same time homeless individuals often do not have the means to pay the fines, resulting in a vicious circle. Staff from the Vacaville Police Department continues to have discussions with the District Attorney's Office to encourage prosecution but at the same time, staffing shortages and budgeting priorities require staff focus on the more serious crimes.

Another method of addressing these behaviors would be to pursue restraining orders against harmful persons. Some homeless individuals utilize public facilities for activities other than their intended use, such as utilizing public restrooms for maintenance of personal hygiene, and also by harassing staff and private citizens. Such orders are difficult to handle and the harassment has to be proven over a longer period of time. No such orders have been obtained at this time.

Implementation of additional programs and Ordinances that will limit chronically homeless individuals' ability to stay on the streets could help to stabilize their situations. For those who still refuse to take advantage of services, additional Ordinances could assist to address their negative behaviors.

Appendix A – Assistance Provided in Sheltering the Homeless

- In 2008, 127 individuals were served by the Opportunity House, Vacaville’s homeless shelter. A total of 2352 people were unable to be placed in the shelter for various reasons. Of these:
 - ✓ 551 were single individuals
 - ✓ 1672 were families with children
 - ✓ 129 were single males
- In 2008, the Vacaville Housing Counseling Center worked with 82 homeless families to provide services.
- The Vacaville FIRST office reported working with a total of 74 homeless individuals from July 1, 2008 to May 31, 2009. Of those 74 homeless individuals, 50 (68%) were parents with children and lived in the following:



- From January to August 2009, the Opportunity House worked with 133 individuals. This represents a dramatic increase in the number of individuals being served than in 2008. In addition, 1048 people were unable to be placed in the shelter. Of these:
 - ✓ 225 were single females
 - ✓ 85 were single males
 - ✓ 738 were families with children

Appendix B – Anecdotal Information Regarding the Homeless

- CAP Solano conducted an observational study and survey in January 2009. They observed 400 and interviewed 279 homeless individuals across the county. Of the 400 people observed, 14 claimed Vacaville as home.
- Solano County Healthcare for the Homeless estimates that there are approximately 200 homeless individuals in Vacaville with approximately 50 of those living on the street and 150 who are living with friends and/or family.
- On April 29, 2009, a local faith-based coalition conducted an interview of 22 homeless individuals. While these 22 individuals are only a portion of the current Vacaville homeless population, some interesting trends were discovered. The following information was gleaned from these interviews:
 - 27% of the homeless interviewed were women
 - Individuals ranged from 16-75 years of age
 - the average age was 45 years old
 - All of the 22 individuals interviewed claimed Vacaville as their city of residence
 - These individuals have lived in Vacaville anywhere from 2.5 to 45 years.
 - ❖ The average length of Vacaville residency was 23 years

Appendix C – Homeless Children in Schools and Type of Living Situations

The following is information related to the number of homeless students in the Vacaville Unified School District and their current form of housing.

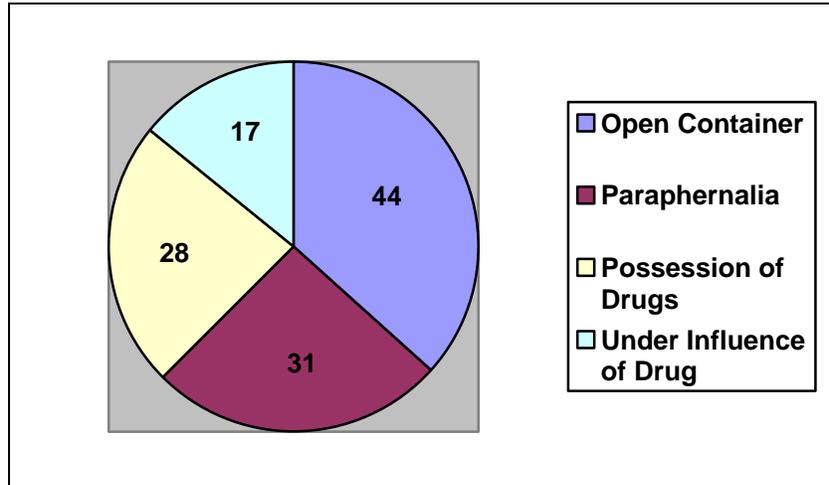
Grade Level	Pre-k	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Ungraded*	Total
Number of Homeless		5	2	4	6	3	2	3	7	5	4	2	4	3		50

Type of Residency	Shelters	Double-up/tripled-up	Unsheltered*	Hotels/Motels	Total
Number of Homeless	9	23	3	15	50

CRIMES COMMITTED BY THE HOMELESS

Appendix D

The following is information related to the top four crimes committed by homeless individuals in Vacaville according to VVPD.



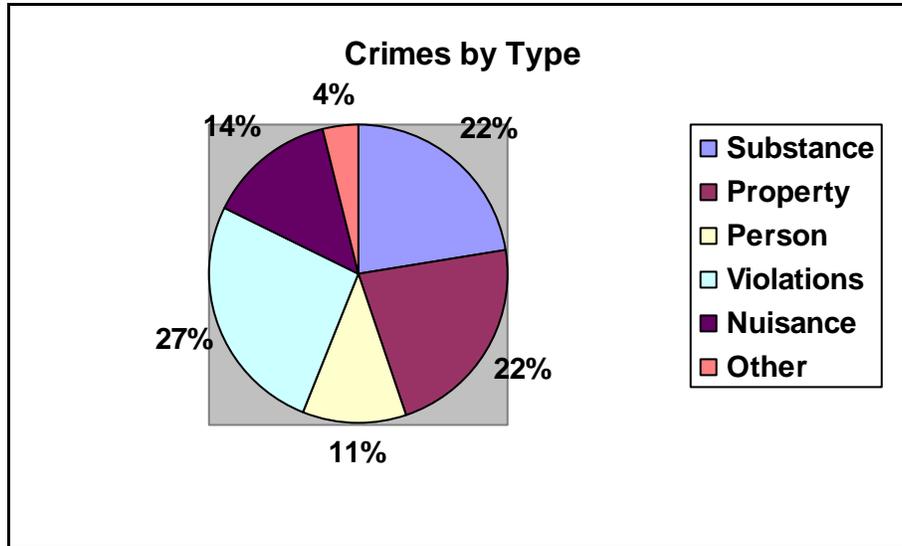
Appendix E

The following is a breakdown of the crimes most frequently committed by homeless individuals in Vacaville.

# of Crimes	Crime
100	Disorderly
97	Warrant
60	Unlawful Camping
47	Probation Violation
44	Open Container
31	Paraphernalia
28	Possession of Drugs
20	Burglary
20	Violation of Court Order
19	Theft
19	Parole Violation
17	Under influence of Drugs
16	Battery on Spouse
16	In Park After Dark

Appendix F

The following is the same information as Appendix E, broken down by type of crime.



Appendix G – Potential Police Costs

Costs	Per arrest
Investigative	\$15,600
Court Related Expenses	\$316
Jury Trial	\$1,264
Lab/Property & Evidence Costs	\$615
Potential Total Per Incident	Up to \$17,795

The numbers reported above represent the potential cost to the City just for Police Services and staff time. However, the VVPD indicated that most homeless arrests actually require little investigative time and they incur very little court expenses, so the above is a high estimate and incidents rarely reach this level of expense. However, the potential is there. The reality, though, is that there are costs for property and evidence collection as well as officer time to follow-up on reports of crimes being committed by homeless individuals. Even if the contact does not result in an arrest, there is still an expense incurred by the City for the officer(s) time to respond. Those figures are difficult to obtain, therefore the estimate of potential cost based on previous trends is the best indicator of expenses related to criminal activity.

References

Homeless Coalition Interviews April 29, 2009

Homelessness Report, Solano County Health & Social Services

National Center for Homeless Education

<http://www.serve.org/nche/>

National Coalition for the Homeless

<http://www.nationalhomeless.org>

Solano County UPDATE Newsletter, May 2007

<http://www.solanocounty.com/civica/filebank/blobdload.asp?BlobID=2953>

The Metropolitan Center

<http://metropolitan.fiu.edu>

The National Law Center for Homelessness & Poverty

<http://nlchp.org/content/pubs/2009HomesNotHandcuffs1.pdf>

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/homeless/lawsandregs/mckv.cfm>

Ad-Hoc Homeless Task Force Regular Attendees and Contributors

Ana Isabel Montano, City of Vacaville, FIRST
Anne Putney, City of Vacaville, Department of Housing and Redevelopment
Becky Cruz, Solano County Office of Education
Bob Johnson, Vacaville Storehouse
Bob Vollmer, Downtown Vacaville Business Improvement District
Cheri Lincoln, Vacaville Unified School District
Cyndi Johnston, City of Vacaville, Department of Housing and Redevelopment
Daniel Bell, Advocate for the Homeless
Darren Paulson, Providence Community Church
Deena Davidson, Opportunity House
Dilenna Harris, City of Vacaville, Councilmember
Dr. Tom Smith, Crossroads Counseling
Emily Cantu, City of Vacaville, Department of Housing and Redevelopment
Jay Stoops, Abundant Life Ministries
John Fedota, Calvary Chapel
Joseph McElligott, City of Vacaville, Police Department
Laura Kuhn, City of Vacaville, City Manager
Patrick Stasio, Solano County, Health & Social Services
Randy Goodwin, Solano County, Health & Social Services
Tom McRee, Vacaville Church and Community Coalition
Rich Word, City of Vacaville, Police Department
Rod Halsey, Valley Church/Mission Solano
Shereene Wilkerson, Vacaville Unified School District
Sue Weiss, Travis Unified School District
Tyffany Wanberg, City of Vacaville, Department of Housing and Redevelopment

Acknowledgements

Becky Cruz, Solano County Office of Education

Bill Reardon, Solano County Veteran's Affairs

Cheri Lincoln, Vacaville Unified School District

Colleen Erdes, Opportunity House

Dave Edwards, Vacaville Police Department

Emily Gay, First Place for Youth

Gloria Diaz, Vacaville FIRST Office

Howard Friedman, Solano County H&SS

Isabel Montano, Vacaville FIRST Office

Jeffery Jewell, Veteran's Administration

Karl Porter, Solano County H&SS

Nils Carlson, Vacaville Police Department

Patrick Stasio, Solano County H&SS

PJ Davis, CAP Solano

Tamina Vahidy, UC Berkeley

Vacaville Department of Housing & Redevelopment

Ad-Hoc Homeless Task Force White Paper Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Ad-Hoc Homeless Task Force, a partnership of members of the faith-based community, local social service providers, and the City, was formed to facilitate the move of approximately 20 homeless individuals who were staying in tents behind the Burlington Coat Factory building, (formerly Mervyn's). As the group continued to meet, it began discussing other issues related to homelessness, panhandling, and day laborers within Vacaville. The group agreed to continue meeting on an ad-hoc basis to address service gaps it had identified, as well as some of the inappropriate behaviors demonstrated by some homeless individuals in the Downtown area.

One of the outcomes of the Task Force is the White Paper Report, which is designed to serve as a resource to the Council and the community at large regarding who are the homeless in Vacaville, what do they need to be successful at reintegrating themselves into the community, and what options the City may have available to address issues of inappropriate behavior by some homeless individuals. Some of the findings in the report include:

Demographics:

The number of homeless in Vacaville is estimated in the range of 14-200. This estimate includes only those who are living in supervised, publicly or privately operated shelters designed to provide temporary living accommodations, or are living in a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings. The precariously housed, those living with friends or family, are difficult to count and an estimate cannot be provided.

Families

Over the last 18 months, the Vacaville FIRST office worked with 50 families who needed housing assistance, and the Vacaville Housing Counseling Center has worked with 114 adults with dependent children who are at imminent risk of becoming homeless. Opportunity House has reported that more complete families, including fathers, are seeking shelter from them than ever before. Information provided by Community Action Partnership (CAP) Solano shows that across the county the number of the newly homeless population have increased 30% over last year, and more and more homeless are not the stereotypical single male, but rather are women with children.

Youth

The Travis Unified School District is currently working with eight homeless children in Vacaville and the Vacaville Unified School District has another 50 children in their district who are considered homeless. Anecdotally, there are also approximately 5-6 youth ages 15-19 years old that currently sleep in the creek beds. This number fluctuates, but has been known to be as large as 11 youths.

Veterans

Representatives from the Solano County Department of Veteran's Services and Solano County Healthcare for the Homeless report that approximately 30% of the adult male homeless population are Veterans. As applied to the 14-200 range, then approximately 39 males fit the profile.

Elderly

In April 2009, an interview of 22 homeless individuals was conducted by a collaboration of several local faith-based organizations. Of the 22, 5 (23%) were over age 55. Many of the individuals interviewed will be 55 and over within the next 5-10 years.

Challenges:

The homeless in Vacaville face challenges in reintegrating themselves into the community:

Affordable Housing

Affordable housing communities often have lengthy wait lists. When a unit does become available, the homeless face a second hurdle of meeting rental criteria, the most important being a steady source of income, which many homeless persons do not have. They also have to pass a credit and rental history check, and finally, many affordable housing communities conduct criminal background screening, and many homeless individuals may not pass this screening process.

Addiction Disorders

It is unclear whether drug and alcohol addictions are the cause of homelessness or the result of it. National data suggests that “approximately 9.6% of the homeless with children are dealing with issues of substance abuse, while 37.1% of homeless individuals are dealing with these issues.” If national trends were translated to the homeless in Vacaville, then based on a probable homeless population of 14-200, up to 74 individuals could be struggling with addiction disorders.

Mental Illness

Of the 22 homeless Vacaville residents interviewed in April 2009, 11 (50%) also self-reported having a mental health diagnosis ranging from depression to schizophrenia. Of the 11, only 3 indicated they were receiving treatment (taking medication or receiving therapy). National data suggests that “7.9% of the homeless population of individuals in a family suffer from some type of mental illness. Additionally, 22.4% of the homeless individuals...have a mental illness.”

Gaps and Filling Them:

While action is required, caution must be taken to not deplete an already strained system. There are several possibilities for action:

Outreach

Few, if any, social service agencies have the ability to conduct one-on-one outreach like the faith-based community, so establishing ongoing partnerships with faith-based organizations will be critical to reach out to the homeless to ensure they are aware, and hopefully take advantage of, the services that are available to them to assist in stabilizing their situations and returning to society. The City could search for grant opportunities where funding would support a liaison to coordinate these efforts.

Housing

Some of the current outreach strategies include proposals by the faith-based community to implement two different sheltering programs, one being a nomadic shelter and the other being a program similar to the “Housing First” model. Under the nomadic sheltering program, those homeless individuals who are clean and sober may board a bus that would take them to one of several churches where they could get a warm meal and sleep for the night. The next morning, the bus would return them to the pick up location. The second program would be similar to Housing First, where transitional housing would be available as the foundation of stabilization efforts that would also include the availability of supportive services to address mental illness and addictions.

Anti-Panhandling Campaign

The City is currently reviewing how it can regulate panhandling activities (protected under free speech) to minimize its impact on the community. In addition, a community-wide education campaign and strategy similar to Santa Monica’s Dolphin Change Program, or the Parking Meter Program (adopted by several large cities, including San Francisco and Denver) could have a positive impact in Vacaville. In both programs, the community is educated about panhandling and explaining that the only thing they are supporting by giving money to

panhandlers is their ability to stay on the streets another day. The program encourages citizens not to give their spare change to panhandlers directly, but rather donate them via strategically placed Dolphin Statues or revamped Parking Meters (placed in areas where panhandling is the heaviest). The funds are collected several times a year and given as grants to organizations providing direct services to the homeless, such as meals, clothing, etc.

Changing Behaviors

It is anticipated that the situationally homeless (those affected by the economy) and many of the episodic (reoccurring) and chronic homeless in Vacaville will seek services under these efforts. However, it is possible, even probable, that a few of the chronically homeless individuals in Vacaville will continue to refuse services. These individuals need to be aware that the community will support their efforts to stabilize their lives, but that they cannot continue the way they have been.