

July 27, 2005

Santa Monica, CA

## INFORMATION ITEM

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: City Staff

SUBJECT: Update on Current City Efforts to Address Homelessness in Santa Monica

### Introduction

The following report provides a summary of efforts currently underway related to the objective to reduce the impact of homelessness in Santa Monica. This summary includes those short and long term projects which were initiated or substantively advanced since the last update to the Council earlier this month.

### Discussion

A community priority to address the impacts of homelessness in Santa Monica was adopted by Council at its February 8 City Council meeting and further refined as a top priority in the City's FY 2005-06 budget adopted in June 2005. Current work efforts include the following:

**Representative for Homeless Initiatives:** As directed by the Council, the City Manager has drafted a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for "Leadership on Homeless Initiatives." This new position, will initially report to the City Manager, to create and implement new approaches and expand successful models – acting regionally while serving locally. The proposed RFQ is attached for final review and comment.

**National Alliance to End Homelessness Conference:** An interdepartmental team from the City (City Manager's Office, CCS/Human Services Division, Police Department and Fire Department) attended the July 2005 annual conference in Washington D.C. Staff participated in a range of sessions – with particular emphasis on the “housing first” approach. Evidence from national research demonstrates housing first to be a successful and cost effective approach to getting chronically homeless people off of the streets. This model, although fairly new, has been successfully replicated by several cities including: New York, Chicago, Philadelphia and San Francisco. It is important to note that while these cities have high-cost housing markets, they also tend to have more housing stock for rehabilitation or master leasing to foster housing first efforts – something Santa Monica does not have. Nevertheless, efforts to pilot a housing first approach within the existing Chronic Homeless Project are underway.

Interdepartmental team members went on Capitol Hill visits to Senator Boxer, Senator Feinstein and Congressman Waxman's offices. These visits focused on: request for support on several federal homeless initiatives including SELHA (Services for Ending Long-Term Homelessness Act) which would establish new funding for services to end chronic homelessness; and advocacy for use of the Veterans Administration for the creation of a year-round therapeutic treatment facility for chronically homeless veterans.

Finally, City staff attended a special session hosted by the Federal Interagency Council on Homelessness regarding the unique challenges that resort and tourist destinations face in ending chronic homelessness. Attending jurisdictions included: Miami, Miami Beach, Dade County, Broward County, Palm Springs, Long Beach, Virginia Beach, the State of Massachusetts, and the State of Utah. Key issues discussed included: 1) attraction of homeless people to locations with amenities such as beach showers; 2) positive promotion of the locale which attract both tourists and homeless people; 3) prime pedestrian tourist areas for lucrative panhandling; and 4) the exacerbation in resort/destination cities of commonly faced challenges such as high housing costs; the rise of low-wage service sector jobs; and resistance of surrounding cities to share regional responsibility for homelessness. The meeting was a planning session for a larger focus group meeting to be held in Southern California this fall.

**Chronic Homelessness Project:** This City project, launched in June 2004 to effectively target housing and services to those most difficult to reach and service resistant homeless people who have been on Santa Monica's streets for an extended period of time, has entered its second year. To date, 25 people have been enrolled in this pilot project, 11 are off the streets, 2 are ready to enter housing, one has passed away and all have a service plan.

**CLARE Jail Outreach Pilot Project:** In order to address the problem of serial public inebriates, in January 2005, the Council directed staff to move forward with the development of a sobering center on an expedited basis and expressed an interest in a regional approach, including the potential to include a sobering center in a County-operated psychiatric urgent care center on the Westside. This concept has been

hindered by the difficulty of siting such a program. Absent a regional location, staff considered options for a local alternative which could be developed quickly.

City staff and local service providers met with staff from P.A.T.H. and Public Counsel twice to discuss "Streets or Services" (SOS) and implementation strategies in Santa Monica. P.A.T.H. staff indicated that the majority of SOS participants in Los Angeles were arrested under Los Angeles City Municipal Code Section 41.18 which prohibits persons from loitering on sidewalks citywide. Absent such an ordinance in the City of Santa Monica, the idea of stationing staff at the Santa Monica jail to focus on persons who are arrested for public intoxication was discussed. Staff from P.A.T.H. and Public Counsel, as well as service providers participating in the Chronic Homeless Pilot, agreed that Santa Monica City staff should pursue such an option.

City and CLARE Foundation staff consequently developed a model for jail outreach and voluntary substance abuse counseling to in-custody arrestees at the Santa Monica Jail who are serial inebriates. The program consists of a CLARE on-call substance abuse counselor who is contacted by Santa Monica Jail staff when a chronic inebriate is in custody and is within in hour of their release-time. It is estimated that over the course of a year, the outreach counselor(s) will make contact with 780 inebriates at the Jail, with approximately 60% of those being persons with multiple public intoxication arrests and therefore considered serial inebriates. Over a 12-month period CLARE anticipates that approximately 50% of the arrestees (390) who are offered the opportunity to interview will actually choose to engage in the interview. Of that 390, it is estimated that approximately 10% or 39 will elect to participate in additional recovery services.

The program began in early July, and after 14 days of operation jail staff identified 17 potential clients, 9 of which were interviewed by CLARE staff. Of these, one individual went to CLARE but walked-off after intake and initial services; one individual (who is also a participant in the Chronic Homeless Pilot) initially refused services from CLARE, but presented herself for services at CLARE three days later and continues to be successful in the program; and one client refused transportation but walked to CLARE and was enrolled in the program.

**Comprehensive System and Program Evaluation:** City staff has initiated the planning process to hire an outside consultant to conduct a comprehensive, quantitative and qualitative evaluation of homeless service delivery in Santa Monica at the systems level. While the delivery of services to the chronically homeless would be the focus, the efficiency and efficacy of the entire service delivery system would be examined. Outcomes of the evaluation would be specific and actionable recommendations for taking advantage of existing strengths, identifying and improving areas for development, filling gaps, improving coordination and leveraging resources. The process includes consulting with local service providers for their input on how to make the evaluation meaningful. The Request for Proposals to hire an evaluator is scheduled to be released by early September 2005; with the initial phase of the evaluation to begin by November 2005; preliminary information available in April 2006 and a final report by the Summer of 2006.

**Veterans Administration:** In June 2005, Council directed staff to work expeditiously with homeless agencies currently providing service at the West Los Angeles Veteran's Administration and with the Westside COG cities to develop a proposed concept plan for long term therapeutic supportive housing for homeless veterans on the north campus of the VA in West Los Angeles. Since then, a coalition of providers, VA staff and City of Santa Monica representatives have been working to develop a strategy for submitting a land use proposal to the Veteran's Administration CARES (Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services) process. The CARES process is designed to establish broad land use priorities for the West Los Angeles VA campus.

At its first meeting in June, the coalition established a sub-committee, including city staff, to draft a land use proposal which supports the allocation of underused property and buildings on the West Los Angeles Veteran's Administration campus for long-term therapeutic housing for homeless veterans. The draft is now complete and the full coalition is scheduled to reconvene in early August 2005 for final comments on the draft, which will be submitted to the VA in September, 2005. The coalition will then begin working on the details of a specific long-term therapeutic housing project for homeless veterans which will be submitted to the VA for consideration after the priority land uses for the West LA campus have been established. The timeline for submission of the specific program proposals has not yet been established by the VA.

**Staff Training:** In March 2005, Council passed an ordinance authorizing rules for the use of public restrooms and facility/meeting rooms. Earlier this month, the City Attorney and other City staff conducted the first of a series of training sessions for City staff who are "on the front lines" in parks and other public spaces. The training provided an overview of the ordinance, what the rules mean and how they can be enforced. The Community and Cultural Services and Police departments continue to work with the City Attorney's office, as needed, regarding potential modifications to the rules for public restroom use. The new rules will go into effect shortly.

**Memorial Park Showers:** In order to further implement the Council policy of ensuring a strong linkage between basic support services (food, showers) and assistance in moving off the streets, showers, located in Memorial Park, the City's principal youth sports venue, will be closed in September, for a minimum of 6 months. As described in a staff report to the Council earlier this year, alternative locations are available for showers, for those people who are actively engaged in case management and other programs to help them move off the streets.

**Outdoor Food Distribution Groups:** An outdoor food distribution group from Loyola Marymount, formerly at Reed Park, has moved indoors to the OPCC Access Center. Further, OPCC and City staff are working with another group, Vineyard Christian Fellowship, to encourage their relocation to OPCC. In addition, City staff have analyzed the City cost of monitoring (park rangers) and clean up (groundskeepers) related to outdoor food distribution groups. Estimates range from \$72.70 per feeding session at Reed Park to \$212.02 per session at Palisades Park. The costs vary based on the

length of time, the number of people, whether sack lunches or hot meals are distributed. Staff are continuing to investigate approaches to outdoor food distribution including a promising new effort in New York City called "Feed the Solution" which is successfully creating stronger linkages between charitable (often religious) food distribution efforts and case management with job and housing placement services.

**LAHSA:** Recently, concerns have been raised about the fiscal operations of the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA). This entity, created by the City and County of Los Angeles to oversee and administer regional coordinated homeless services, is responsible for submitting a county-wide application to HUD for Supportive Housing Program (SHP) and Shelter Plus Care funds. Annually, the City of Santa Monica receives \$3.3 million in Shelter Plus Care funding and \$381,941 in SHP funding for computer tracking and case management services at local agencies. On July 19, 2005, the Los Angeles City Controller completed an assessment of LAHSA's fiscal operations. The assessment found that LAHSA owes considerably more money to providers than it has on hand, and is unable to bill or submit requests in a timely fashion. Examples of problems the City has faced in transacting with LAHSA include delays in contract execution, delays in payment and shifting direction as a result of staff changes. City staff is working closely with LAHSA to ensure that the City, and local providers, receive payment for all outstanding invoices. The City of Santa Monica alone has \$280,000 in outstanding invoices with LAHSA.

**Agency Relocations:** Chrysalis will be relocating its Santa Monica program offices in September, 2005. Chrysalis was able to purchase the building next door to their current location with a private donation received in 2004. Their new address will be 1853 Lincoln Blvd. Santa Monica, CA 90404. In mid-September, St. Joseph Center will be temporarily relocating some of their operations to the building on the southeast corner of Pico and 4<sup>th</sup> Street in Santa Monica, while their new headquarters is under construction on their site at St. Clements Church in Venice. Programs to be relocated include administrative offices; senior and family services; and food pantry. These programs will service approximately 80-100 individuals daily. St. Joseph Center estimates that they will be at the new location for approximately two years.

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Attachment: Request for Qualifications/Leadership on Homeless Initiatives

City of Santa Monica  
Request for Qualifications  
**Leadership on Homeless Initiatives**

Homelessness is a defining challenge for Santa Monica and the Los Angeles region. The experience of New York, Philadelphia, Atlanta, and San Francisco demonstrates that real progress requires:

- Significant political will
- Charismatic leadership
- Specific, coordinated regional planning

A recent census found 91,000 homeless persons in Los Angeles County, including nearly 35,000 chronically homeless individuals. Despite years of work, the situation has not improved, largely because insufficient leadership is focused on this issue.

Southern California needs a strong, visionary leader whose approach to homelessness integrates existing local efforts into more effective regional initiatives – a leader who will motivate and coalesce:

- Elected and appointed governmental officials at municipal, county, state and federal levels
- Social service providers
- Businesses
- Philanthropies
- Faith-based groups

Because no regional entity is currently prepared to engage such a leader, the City of Santa Monica seeks to engage a *Representative for Homeless Initiatives* who will act regionally while serving locally. Working with the City's knowledgeable and well-networked staff, this direction-setter will create and implement new approaches and expand successful models.

The brief for the *Representative for Homeless Initiatives* includes:

Obtaining the necessary federal, state, and regional resources to assure full implementation of the initiatives that follow

Identifying and promoting the implementation of best practices to reduce chronic homelessness and public inebriation

Achieving an alternative sentencing system for homeless individuals and working with the Los Angeles Superior Court, Public Counsel, and other resource organizations to implement a mental health/substance abuse court for the Westside as a regional model

Establishing partnerships with hospitals to determine their current costs to serve homeless individuals for emergency and long-term care, and securing their financial support to achieve and sustain alternative service delivery models such as sobering centers, supportive housing and mental health/substance abuse programs

Fostering development of long-term therapeutic supportive housing for chronically homeless veterans in currently unused buildings on the VA grounds in West Los Angeles

Securing a year-round, 24-hour emergency shelter, transitional housing and long-term therapeutic supportive housing for non-Veteran homeless individuals on the Westside

Working with resource organizations and other stakeholders to develop additional new paradigms for addressing homelessness in Santa Monica and across the region

Developing regional consensus by seeking advice and support from top management of Los Angeles County and the cities of Beverly Hills, West Hollywood, Culver City, and Los Angeles

Coordinating his or her work with efforts to end chronic homelessness in greater Los Angeles

## Terms of Engagement

The *Representative for Homeless Initiatives* will serve for an initial period of 18 months, reporting directly to the City Manager who will ensure appropriate support from all City departments. An ad hoc committee of the City Council will provide policy support. Expert advice regarding mental health, housing, the law, law enforcement and other fields related to the issues of homelessness is available and the individual selected may wish to assemble a working group of advisors.

A fee of \$200,000 will support the engagement for the initial twelve months, with the subsequent six months to be included in the Fiscal Year 2006/07 City Budget. Extension of the assignment beyond eighteen months will be by mutual agreement.

Interested individuals are invited to submit qualifications **by September 9, 2005** to

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By submitting a response to this RFQ, individuals seeking the engagement waive all rights to protest or seek any legal remedies whatsoever regarding any aspect of this Request for Qualifications and the proposal process. The City reserves the right to select any number of qualified finalists. In addition, the City reserves the right to issue written notice to all individuals seeking the engagement of any changes in the submission schedule. Acceptance of any response submitted pursuant to this RFQ shall not constitute any implied intent to enter into a contract for consulting services. The City reserves the right to reject any and all submittals. The City also reserves the right to negotiate the specific requirements and fee for the desired services. This Request for Qualifications does not commit the City of Santa Monica to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a response to this Request for Qualifications. All responses to this Request for Qualifications become the property of the City of Santa Monica.