



# AGENDA REPORT

Community Development

<b>DATE:</b>	January 25, 2022
<b>TO:</b>	Mayor Butt and Members of the City Council
<b>FROM:</b>	Lina Velasco, Director of Community Development Michelle Milam, Crime Prevention Manager
<b>Subject:</b>	Report on Unhoused Interventions
<b>FINANCIAL IMPACT:</b>	Depending on the City Council input, financial impacts may vary. No funds are being expended at this time.
<b>PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION:</b>	Staff is providing an update on the status of unhoused interventions and seeking City Council input on proposed next steps
<b>STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE:</b>	Staff is providing an update on the status of unhoused interventions and seeking City Council input on proposed next steps
<b>RECOMMENDED ACTION:</b>	RECEIVE an update on the status of certain unhoused interventions and PROVIDE staff input on next steps – Community Development Department (Lina Velasco 510-620-6706).

## DISCUSSION:

This is the first of a series of presentations staff will be bringing forward to the City Council to provide an update on unhoused interventions and homelessness prevention activities in the City. At this meeting, City staff will be providing an overview of certain activities related to the unhoused being undertaken by the City or supported with City

funds. Based on the overview, staff is seeking City Council input on proposed next steps, including subsequent presentations outlining additional resources being offered by Contra Costa County and various community based organizations.

### **City Committees Focused on Homelessness and Unhoused Interventions**

The following are City-organized committees related to Homelessness and Unhoused Interventions.

#### **Homeless Task Force:**

In 2017, the City Council established a homeless taskforce. A series of nine policy findings were established by a collaborative team of city, community members, non-profits, and the county to provide direction to Richmond on how to impact homelessness. These policy findings are utilized to develop an annual list of priorities for the City of Richmond. The homeless taskforce is open to the public and meets on the last Thursday of every month. During the pandemic the taskforce meets at 1:00 pm on Zoom. Michelle Milam is the lead staff member for this task force.

#### **City Council Ad-Hoc Committee #1**

On March 16, 2021, the City Council voted to authorize the creation of an ad hoc committee to develop a long-term sustainable, and well-funded plan for assisting unhoused residents of Richmond. This ad hoc committee, which consisted of Mayor Butt, Councilmember Jimenez, and Councilmember McLaughlin, was directed to work with the Homeless Task Force and engage the community in the process in determining long term solutions. This committee was also to explore a safe parking program in a non-residential area. This ad-hoc committee meets monthly, and as needed. Current members are Councilmember Jimenez and Councilmember McLaughlin. Lina Velasco is the lead staff member for this task force.

#### **City Council Ad-hoc Committee #2**

On December 7, 2021, the City Council voted to establish an ad hoc committee, which consisted of Mayor Butt, Councilmember Bates, and Councilmember Martinez, to discuss next steps with Rydin Road and Castro Street encampments. In addition, \$50,000 was allocated for vehicle needs and a request to provide an accounting summary of expenditures related to the Housing Consortium of East Bay (HCEB) contract by city staff. Current member is Councilmember Martinez. The Mayor's staff was organizing this committee.

#### **Implementation Subcommittee of the Reimagining Public Safety Community Task Force - Unhoused Interventions**

Following the City Council's approval of recommendations of the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force, an implementation subcommittee related to Unhoused Interventions was formed to support the implementation of three key recommendations: SOS! Richmond's (SOS) Streets Team and shower services to support scattered sites and encampment outreach, as well as the implementation of an interim sheltering site. A

Request for Proposals was issued in August 2021 seeking a consultant to assist in the identification of potential interim sheltering sites; however, no responses were received.

In September 2021, the City Council authorized a \$983,975 sole source contract with Rebuilding Together Eastbay-North to fund SOS! Richmond to provide outreach and support to unsheltered people who reside in homeless encampments and scattered sites within the City.

As reported by the Reimagining Task Force at the January 18, 2022 City Council meeting, between mid-October and December 2021, SOS has been providing shower services. They have reported an average of 3.5 events per week (Rydin, Castro, Bay Area Rescue Mission (BARM)), with over 300 showers during this period. In addition, on average, SOS collects approximately a ton of trash per day at twelve hotspot locations.

Currently twenty-two SOS employees, who are current and formerly unhoused encampment residents, are reported to be performing successfully and improving quality-of-life in encampments and neighborhoods. Three of the 22 staff members have secured permanent housing during this period and 3 are in recovery. The goal is to provide at least 16 hours per team member per week. Five are at or near full-time status.

### **Castro Stakeholders' Meeting**

On a monthly basis, City staff hosts stakeholder's meeting related to the Castro encampment to provide updates and address concerns. Michelle Milam is the lead organizer for this meeting. The meeting is attended by area business, neighborhood councils, city staff (Fire Marshal, Code Enforcement Manager, Director of Community Development, Police Department) and current service providers, Housing Consortium of the East Bay (HCEB), C.O.R.E., and SOS.

### **Rydin Stakeholders' Meeting**

On a monthly basis, City staff hosts stakeholder's meeting related to the Rydin encampment to provide updates and address concerns. Michelle Milam is the lead organizer for this meeting. The meeting is attended by area business, neighborhood councils, city staff (Fire Marshal, Code Enforcement Manager, Director of Community Development, Police Department) and current service providers, Housing Consortium of the East Bay, C.O.R.E., and SOS.

## **Projects**

### **Homelessness Strategic Plan**

On November 2, 2021, the City Council authorized a contract with Homebase to support the City in the development of a Strategic Plan to develop a long-term plan to reduce and prevent homelessness in our city and strengthen the physical health, mental health, and social service supports for our unhoused residents in Richmond. This work is anticipated to kick-off in February 2022 and take about 8-10 months to complete. A

steering committee will be formed to inform development of the plan, as well as holding community input sessions, and stakeholder interviews.

As part of this effort, the City entered into a collaboration agreement with AllHome, who is providing \$50,000 in funding, to support the development of the Homelessness Strategic Plan, which will be designed to meet the regional goal of reducing unsheltered homelessness in the City by 75% by 2024. The Plan will also assist the City in identifying priorities for implementation and building community consensus on interventions.

## **City Programs and Activities Serving the Unhoused**

### **Scattered Sites Support**

On June 22, 2021, the City Council adopted an urgency ordinance adding a new Section 9.40.018 “Safe Parking Sites Pilot Program” to the Richmond Municipal Code to allow private property owners to host up to four vehicle households for a limited duration.

The Safe Parking Sites Pilot Program (program) creates opportunities for safe and secure places for car and recreation vehicle dwellers to park and sleep, reduce the number of people living illegally in their vehicles on City streets, decrease enforcement actions and resulting legal costs to homeless individuals, and provide resources to secure permanent housing and economic stability. The program allows a variety of community-based organizations, such as non-profits and educational institutions, to become host sites for up to four vehicle households.

As part of the program, the City agreed to provide a Housing Navigator to assist scattered safe parking site dwellers to find permanent housing, and to enter program participants into the Contra Costa County’s Continuum of Care (CofC).

As part of the recommendations from the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force, funding to support scattered safe parking site and encampments using the SOS! Richmond Streets Team; however, approximately \$75,000 were reserved for a Housing Navigator.

In addition to the funds for a Housing Navigator, the City Council authorized a \$983,975 contract with Rebuilding Together Eastbay-North (RBTEBN) to fund SOS! Richmond to provide outreach and support unsheltered people who reside in encampments and scattered sites within the City.

### **Rydin/Castro Safe Parking Program**

In March 2021, the City approved a sole source contract with Housing Consortium of the East Bay (HCEB) to provide program management and housing navigation services in the amount not to exceed \$560,000 at the Rydin and Castro encampments to sunset both encampments by December 31, 2021.

On December 7, 2021, the Richmond City Council voted to not enforce its notice to Abate the Rydin encampment, and rather voted to create an ad-hoc committee to gather input from encampment residents regarding their needs to assist them in transitioning to other interim housing options. Since that date, the ad hoc committee #2 met with Rydin residents to understand needs. With the input received, the ad hoc committee asked staff and HCEB to develop a vehicle repair application form, which was translated into Spanish and distributed at Rydin. Completed applications are due on January 28 and funding recommendations will be reviewed following that date and brought to the Council for approval.

The current HCEB contract ends on February 12, 2022. Without a contract amendment, any services provided by HCEB will end – this includes evening and overnight security, site supervisor, streets team, on-site office unit rental, and housing navigator. The cost of portables and trash pick-up can continue via the RBTEBN/SOS contract.

Since December 7, Collaborising has been meeting with residents and HCEB. HCEB expressed interest and agreed to a community resolution process. Councilmember Martinez, the only remaining member of the Ad hoc committee #2 has requested a meeting to begin to discuss the recommendations Collaborising had collected from Rydin residents.

Daily complaints from local businesses are coming in for Rydin about new vehicles coming in. Since Rydin is a public street, even with staff support, it is difficult to prevent encampment growth. There has been a stakeholder group of the businesses, staff and contractors that meeting monthly to discuss issues and provide updates. The directive of the council was no evictions at the December 7 meeting, which essentially is taken to mean no enforcement of the vehicle code so input is needed on how city staff should be addressing newcomers at the encampment.

City staff understand that there are several complex issues intersecting. As such, to gain clarification, City staff respectfully suggests that the City Council consider providing input on the matters noted below as well as other items related to the unhoused. This will ensure proper policy direction is followed and the needs of stakeholders are addressed:

- *Alternative housing options will be offered prior to abatement: Please confirm that the Police Department, Fire Department, and Public Works staff are able to ensure public safety and enforce applicable State and City codes.*
- *There has also been an influx of tents in areas that have been blocked from vehicle access as vacancies has been achieved. In coordination with CORE, City Public Works staff may respectfully and thoughtfully transition and address new non-program participants.*
- *The amount of debris at Rydin is continuing to increase. Please confirm the City Council is respective of requiring all outdoor belongings to be removed or offered for storage (up to two large totes containers per household) to remain at the*

*encampment? This work will be done in collaboration with other community-based organization, along with Abatement, Fire, and HCEB.*

### Castro Concerns

City staff is extremely concerned that there are some households with children at the Castro encampment. This areas continues to have extreme dumping and blight challenges. Not all of the dumping is generated by the residents there, but from illegal dumpers that use the site as a place to discard unwanted items. Complaints are also being received about the impact the encampment on the use of the Bay Trail segment and potential hazards the encampment vehicles driving on the Bay Trail to users of the trail. There are well over 100 people at the last count at Castro and 27 people have been placed into housing through CORE and HCEB.

Castro has developed a culture of criminal activity that discourages people from feeling safe to take resources. The neighborhood remains in opposition of having the encampment there.

### Funding

The City, with support from HTA, submitted an encampment resolution grant application for Castro. City staff anticipates hearing back regarding our application in March/April. It is a 2-year grant with the bulk of the work frontloaded into year 1.

Funds were also awarded by Chevron to the Richmond Community Foundation to add a social worker to the CORE team to expand the support services for the unhoused.

### State Budget

On January 10, 2022, Governor Newsom released his budget proposal for the 2022-2023 fiscal year, called the [California Blueprint](#). Below is a high-level overview of proposed expenditures related to the unhoused.

#### **Homelessness** (\$2 billion total)

- \$1.5 billion: solutions to get people off the streets and into shelters/treatment
- \$500 million: encampments resolution (up from \$50M in FY 21-22)
- \$10 million: Returning Home Well

In the course of his remarks, Governor Newsom spent significant time emphasizing interim housing and the need to get people out of encampments, local accountability for outcomes and "leaning into conservatorship" reform to help people who are not able to make decisions to help themselves. When asked about specifics he indicated that those would be provided to the Legislature in the weeks ahead. Notably missing was any additional funds for rental assistance beyond what the U.S. Treasury has provided through the COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program. CA recently requested an additional \$1.9B from U.S. Treasury and was informed last week that it can only expect \$62M, which is far short of the remaining unmet need for rental arrearage in the state. Governor Newsom committed to ongoing advocacy to secure additional federal

funds, even though CA has already received 30% of the reallocated funds recouped from other parts of the country that failed to use or didn't need them. If no further federal funds are made available, this may be an issue that will be addressed in the May revise. However, by March 31, 2022, all state protections related to tenants awaiting rental assistance will have expired.

### **Health and Behavioral Health**

- Universal Healthcare Coverage by 2024 regardless of age or immigration status
- Community-based mobile crisis intervention resources - \$1.4B
- Stabilization and diversion for people with severe mental illness - \$571M
- CalAIM reform - \$2.8B - coupled with last year's investment of \$1.2B, CA will be reforming the entire approach. In this section the Governor spoke about "achieving true Whole Person Care." There were no details provided today, but the implementation of this reform package will be critical to an adequate response at scale for those who are chronically homeless.

### **Housing (\$2 billion total)**

Governor Newsom mentioned that investments will focus on incentives for density near jobs, schools, parks and transit/infill development that is both sustainable and reduces sprawl that could overlap with areas of the state susceptible to wildfire.

- Sustainable Housing Developments
  - \$500 million: Infill Infrastructure Grant Program (\$225 million in 2022-23, and \$275 million in 2023-24)
  - \$300 million: Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (\$75 million in 2022-23, and \$225 million in 2023-24)
  - \$100 million: State excess sites development
  - \$100 million: adaptive reuse incentive grants
- Affordable housing
  - \$200 million (\$50 million in 2022-23, and \$150 million in 2023-24): Mixed-income housing development loans
  - \$200 million: portfolio reinvestment program
  - \$100 million: mobile home park rehabilitation

The State budget is anticipated to provide more funding targeted toward supporting the unhoused to transition from encampments to interim and permanent housing options.

### **NEXT STEPS:**

Staff is seeking input from the City Council regarding next steps pertaining to the unhoused to enable appropriate coordination with local community based organization and Contra Costa County. This is the first of a series of presentations staff will be bringing forward to the City Council to provide an update on unhoused interventions and homelessness prevention activities in the City. A summary of the expenditures and contract compliance for funds expended by the City is in progress and will be forthcoming in the near term. Staff will be providing additional reports and input sessions with the City Council.