

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Leadership Council for the City of San Diego Community Action Plan on Homelessness

From: Implementation Team

Date: November 20, 2020

Subject: Summary of Activity for the Meeting of October 19, 2020

The fourth meeting of the Leadership Council for the City of San Diego Community Action Plan on Homelessness (Action Plan) was held on October 19, 2020, via teleconference.

This memorandum summarizes the discussion that occurred, questions raised, and actions taken.

The members of the Leadership Council are identified in the table below.

Peter Seidler was not in attendance

City of San Diego	Mayor	Mayor Kevin Faulconer
San Diego City Council	Councilmember serving on the Regional Task Force on the Homeless	Councilmember Chris Ward
County of San Diego	County Supervisor serving on the Regional Task Force on the Homeless	Supervisor Nathan Fletcher
San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC)	President and Chief Executive Officer	Richard C. Gentry
Regional Task Force on the Homeless (RTFH)	Chief Executive Officer	Tamera Kohler
Philanthropic Organization	Lucky Duck Foundation	Peter Seidler
Individual with Lived Experience	Voices of Our City Choir	John Brady
Business Representative	SDG&E	Mitch Mitchell

The members of the Interagency Implementation Team are identified in the table below.

All members were in attendance.

San Diego City Council	Chief of Staff for Councilmember Ward	Molly Chase
City of San Diego	Chief of Homelessness Strategies & Housing Liaison	Keely Halsey
San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC)	Executive Vice President of Strategic Initiatives	Lisa Jones
Regional Task Force on the Homeless (RTFH)	Chief Executive Officer	Tamera Kohler

The agenda included the following main topics:

- Action Plan Areas of Focus for 2021
- Activity on Action Plan Three-Year Goals and Foundational Strategies
- Partner Updates

The Implementation Team presented a document with recommended areas of focus for calendar year 2021 for the Leadership Council's review and discussion during the meeting. The discussion and input from the Leadership Council members on the recommendations are intended to help guide staff. The recommendations presented at the meeting can be found in Attachment A and are referenced below.

This was the last represented meeting with Mayor Faulconer and Councilmember Ward as members of the Leadership Council. SDHC President & CEO Gentry and other members of the Leadership Council recognized their contributions and roles as founding members of the Leadership Council and thanked them for their leadership.

Action Plan Areas of Focus for 2021

The Implementation Team informed the Leadership Council that a presentation would be made to the City Council on October 27, 2020, on progress toward the Action Plan goals and the potential recommended areas of focus for calendar year 2021. The Implementation Team shared the recommended areas of focus with the Leadership Council for input and guidance that could then be incorporated into the presentation to the City Council.

The areas of focus are categorized by Foundational Strategies. Some of the items are recommended actions from the Action Plan that were identified as higher priority items, and others are activities that were identified this year as a result of successes and lessons learned through Operation Shelter to Home. The list only highlights new recommended areas of focus; it does not include all activities underway.

Implement a Systems Level Approach to Homeless Planning

Under the Foundational Strategy to implement a systems level approach to homeless planning, the Implementation Team recommended implementing a City Homelessness Response Center and Neighborhood-Based Coordinated Outreach Program concurrently. The Implementation Team informed the Leadership Council that both items would be presented to the City Council on October 27, 2020, and if approved, would be implemented in tandem over the coming months to create a coordinated, client-centric, City of San Diego Homelessness Crisis Response System. The Homelessness Response Center will provide system navigation services that coordinate all activities to move someone from homelessness to housed. The Coordinated Outreach Program will strategically engage with individuals and focus outreach resources in a neighborhood-based approach in alignment with RTFH's Outreach and Encampment policies. The two programs will make significant progress in filling system gaps and creating a unified systems-level approach.

The Implementation Team also recommended regularly reporting on Action Plan progress through a front-facing, transparent, reporting dashboard. An Action Plan "[Progress at a Glance](#)" dashboard is available on SDHC's website. The dashboard is a first iteration and will soon include data metrics that will report quarterly on progress toward the Action Plan goals.

Along with the quarterly reports, the Implementation Team recommended creating a communications workgroup to develop practices on how to strategically communicate to the community on progress toward the Action Plan goals.

Create a Client-Centered Homelessness Assistance System

Operation Shelter to Home placed a strong focus on creating a client-centered homelessness assistance system. Work is already underway on engaging with Advisory Groups, and the Implementation Team recommended increasing the participation and engagement with these groups to infuse these lenses in the systems-level approach.

The Action Plan reports that Black San Diegans are overrepresented in the region's population of persons experiencing homelessness. Data show that this population is being served in an equitable rate in regard to *exits from homelessness to housing*, and the Implementation Team recommended identifying and

determining any potential opportunities to impact the contributing factors related to the disproportionate representation of certain populations regarding *entry into homelessness*.

Another recommended area of focus for next year will be to analyze the places and spaces where housing is denied or more difficult to access because of the negative impacts of enforcement and criminal history on people experiencing homelessness. The Coordinated Outreach program will play an important role in acting on this focus and increasing access to programs and services.

Lastly, the Implementation Team recommended implementing an automated program to gather systems-feedback from persons experiencing homelessness. This system will provide both quantitative and qualitative feedback that will be utilized to define and inform changes that may be needed. The automated program is easy to use and anonymous, which should encourage high utilization and honest feedback.

Increase the Production of/Access to Permanent Solutions

The Implementation Team recommended building on the successful level of collaboration that supported the Hotel Acquisition Project. As additional funding becomes available, the City will be more competitive due to the successes and lessons learned from this year. The Implementation Team recommended broadening the scope of looking at permanent solutions, identifying new partnerships and opportunities, and reviewing all funded projects in the citywide pipeline to understand what projects are coming online and when. The data need to be centralized to better identify areas to work more strategically to increase housing resources and shorten occupancy timelines.

The Implementation Team also recommended continuing the advocacy around funding opportunities for additional projects and to identify development targets. The state created mechanisms to expedite low-income housing developments, and there is a need to build on this to meet the goals outlined in the Action Plan through actions like creating a “diamond lane” process with the City Planning Office and continuing to implement the recommendations from the San Diego Housing Commission’s “Preserving Affordable Housing in the City of San Diego” report.

The Leadership Council did not recommend any revisions to the Areas of Focus for Calendar Year 2021. The members of the Leadership Council commended the approach to utilize successes and lessons learned from Operation Shelter to Home to guide the areas of focus for next year, and stated the importance to identify clear annual goals in addition to the near-term goals outlined in the Action Plan.

Activity on Community Action Plan Three-Year Goals and Foundational Strategies

The Implementation Team highlighted a few activities that occurred this calendar year toward meeting the goals outlined in the Action Plan. The activities are categorized into two groups, Actioned Activities and Accelerated Activities, and are guided by at least one of the five Foundational Strategies from the Action Plan. Following the Leadership Council meeting, a presentation was made to City Council on October 27, 2020, and those materials and video are available online on the [City Council’s website](#).

Accelerated Activities are activities that have occurred in response to COVID-19 or at an accelerated rate due to the pandemic. Actioned Activities are activities that the Implementation Team carried out in the initial months of calendar year 2020 as part of the implementation of the plan.

1. Accelerated Activities/COVID-19 Response

Operation Shelter to Home launched on April 1, 2020, to protect San Diegans experiencing homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic. The temporary shelter at the Convention Center serves a population of more than 1,000 individuals daily and has maintained a very low COVID-19 positivity rate among clients, staff and volunteers.

The response to COVID-19 concurrently with the homelessness crisis both tested and demonstrated the validity and value of the Action Plan. The Action Plan allowed the Implementation Team and Leadership

Council to make informed and aligned decisions that support the goals and Foundational Strategies outlined in the Action Plan and continued to foster the development of an integrated system.

2. Actioned Activities

Implement the Neighborhood-Based Coordinated Street Outreach Program

After the Leadership Council meeting, the San Diego City Council approved the Neighborhood-Based Coordinated Street Outreach Program on October 27, 2020. People Assisting the Homeless (PATH) will be operating the program. PATH demonstrated successes in their existing programs that will align closely with the Coordinated Outreach Program. This program will be implemented in tandem with the City of San Diego Homelessness Response Center to create a coordinated, client-centric City of San Diego Homelessness Crisis Response System.

The Coordinated Outreach Program also aligns with the Outreach Standards and Practices that RTFH is developing. The RTFH is working with OrgCode Consulting and specifically Iain De Jong, a nationally recognized expert, to develop an enhanced set of standards for street outreach services. A draft of outreach standards is currently being presented to various stakeholders and is in the process of being adopted by RTFH.

PEER Pilot program with San Diego City College

The Homelessness Program for Engaged Educational Resources, or PEER, is a collaboration between SDHC and San Diego City College. The program provides homeless services industry-specific education to develop the local workforce needed for programs and services that help individuals experiencing homelessness. Students will learn about national and regional policy, local programming, and practical application, including having opportunities to engage with a variety of service provider staff and regional and national experts. Students will also receive assistance from dedicated career counselors to work with students on career planning and job placement opportunities within the local homeless services industry.

The first class was on October 13, 2020, through live video conference, with 42 students enrolled this semester.

Engagement with Advisory Groups

An increased effort has taken place to engage with advisory groups to create a communication feedback loop on the implementation of the Action Plan. RTFH made a concerted effort to engage with youth through the Youth Action Board. Engagement with advisory groups of persons with lived experience is being implemented with the HEAL Network and Voices of Our City Choir.

RTFH also established an Ad Hoc Committee on Addressing Homelessness Among Black San Diegans to explore the factors contributing to the disparities among Black persons experiencing homelessness, listen and engage in extensive public dialogue with community stakeholders, and develop a series of recommendations that the Continuum of Care can take to better address the impacts of systemic racism and its effects within the homeless crisis response system.

Partner Updates

RTFH implemented a change in their leadership structure. As a result of the growth the organization experienced, RTFH bifurcated their board between the nonprofit organization and the Continuum of Care. The two groups work closely together, and RTFH will continue to work to enhance the collaboration between the region and the City.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will occur in mid-to-late January 2021, depending on most members' availability.

Implement a Systems-Level Approach to Homelessness Planning

- Implement City of San Diego Homelessness Response Center and system performance reporting
- Implement Coordinated Outreach Program
- Develop and provide quarterly reports to community stakeholders on progress against Community Action Plan
- Create a communications workgroup and plan

Create a Client-Centered Homeless Assistance System

- Increase participation in system and program plan feedback by People with Lived Experience
- Analyze data, identify, and determine any potential opportunities to impact the contributing factors related to disproportionate representation of certain populations regarding entry into homelessness
- Reduce negative impacts of enforcement and criminal history on people experiencing homelessness and any barriers that may come up towards obtaining housing
- Implement automated client feedback program to improve system performance

Increase the Production of/Access to Permanent Solutions

- Identify near-term goals
- Identify currently funded projects in pipeline and occupancy timeline
- Identify funding opportunities for additional projects
 - State advocacy
 - Federal advocacy
- Identify annual development targets beginning in 2021
- Work with City Planning Office to create a “diamond lane” process to expedite low-income housing development executed as part of this plan
- Coordinate timing of funding competitions across partners to support pipeline expansion in alignment with this plan
- Work with community partners to identify potential land/property for development
- Identify SRO properties for preservation
- Work with County, State, and local partners to identify service funding for Permanent Supportive Housing units to be developed

Background and Purpose of the Community Action Plan on Homelessness

The Community Action Plan on Homelessness (Community Action Plan) is a comprehensive, 10-year plan that builds on recent progress, lays out short-term achievable goals, and serves as a guide for long-term success in addressing homelessness.

The Community Action Plan was developed by Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) through a contract with the San Diego Housing Commission (Housing Commission) on behalf of the City. The San Diego City Council unanimously accepted the Community Action Plan on October 14, 2019.

Implementing Structure

The Community Action Plan recommends the creation of a governance structure that supports cross agency collaboration, systems-level thinking and accountability.

The City-wide Leadership Council is a group of community leaders and partners that participate in regular reviews of progress on the Action Plan. The group includes agency leadership in addition to other groups including a person with lived experience, business and philanthropic leaders.

The Interagency Implementation Team is a group of senior level staff from the main funding agencies and oversight structures in the City related to homelessness. The group provides recommendations to the Leadership Council, carry out actions and activities to achieve the goals in the Action Plan based on priorities within the framework of the five foundational strategies.

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Regional Task Force on the Homeless (RTFH)	Chief Executive Officer	Tamera Kohler

Key Items for Immediate Consideration

CSH identified six key items that should be addressed by the Leadership Council and Implementation Team early in its formation. These items are complex in nature, and require close coordination and alignment between partners to identify appropriate paths for resolution.

1. Additional Behavioral Health Resources

The implementation team is in ongoing conversations with the County to broaden the eligibility of Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) vouchers to be more client-centered. The San Diego County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the FY 2020-21 budget, which includes \$5.4 million for the County fund essential supportive services for individuals who reside at permanent supportive housing locations.

2. HUD-VASH and POFA Voucher Utilization

Operation Shelter to Home provided an opportunity to improve the utilization of Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) and Project One For All (POFA) vouchers. Through coordination with local, regional, and federal leaders, including leaders from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and operational staff, barriers around how the VASH program historically operated were addressed. This led to a dramatically higher utilization rate of VASH vouchers.

The County contracted with Mental Health Systems (MHS) to provide services on-site at the Convention Center to actively identify individuals that may be eligible for POFA vouchers. In addition SDHC staff worked closely with MHS, contracted POFA service providers, and County Behavioral Health Services (BHS) leadership to reduce barriers to process and increase voucher utilization. The political will and leadership of the Mayor Faulconer's office, Supervisor Fletcher, Tamer Kohler of RTFH and the SDHC's CEO Rick Gentry has been integral in achieving these successes with the VA and County BHS partners.

3. Enforcement of Ordinances

Over the past several years, the San Diego Police Department (SDPD) has made changes to the way officers interact with homeless individuals.

The City established the Neighborhood Policing Division (NPD). The division helps serve as a bridge between communities with concerns about quality of life issues, including homelessness-related issues, and individuals in need, to help get individuals experiencing homelessness connected to social services. The division includes the non-enforcement focused Homeless Outreach Team, which has been especially active during the pandemic, offering shelter and services in communities throughout the City.

While SDPD has a responsibility to be responsive to calls for service and community complaints, including those related to homelessness, NPD provides a measure of balance that takes into account the needs of individuals experiencing homelessness and the opportunity law enforcement has to direct individuals to services. NPD has implemented controls and training that provide for education-led “progressive” levels of enforcement for various offenses. The officers provide connections to services and available shelter during their interactions, while educating individuals on the laws that apply in order to encourage compliance. Working directly with service providers, NPD also created a program through which individuals can accept a shelter bed in lieu of enforcement actions, to increase the number of individuals who may choose to accept services and get connected to help.

The City has also made strides to improve the Homeless Court program, which provides individualized resolution of outstanding criminal matters, by making it available to a larger group of individuals and allowing for resolution of parking violations.

The City and SDPD also continued to fund and participate in the Serial Inebriate Program (SIP), for alcohol users; Prosecution and Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (PLEADS), for narcotics users; and the Serial Misdemeanants at Risk Program (SMART), for various offenses, all of which offer treatment and alternatives to and diversion away from the criminal justice system and serve as tools for SDPD to use to direct individuals toward help.

4. **Improvements in Outreach**

On 1/16/2020 RTFH adopted an unsheltered and encampment policy to provide guidance on a shared vision and approach among the San Diego region for addressing the needs of unsheltered persons including those in encampments. Additionally, a Request for Proposals for Neighborhood Based Coordinated Outreach was released in August 2020. The recommendation for award for the ranking RFP proposal will go the Commission Board on 10/16/2020 and to the Housing Authority and City Council on 10/27/2020.

5. **Housing Navigation Center and Neil Good Day Center Evaluation**

The current use restriction covenant on the Neil Good Day Center will expire in approximately one year, which prompted a discussion on how the site and resources will be used in the future, especially given the site’s close proximity to the newly established Housing Navigation Center. The Community Action Plan recommended a review of the housing navigation outcomes of the Housing Navigation Center, alongside the use and outcomes of the Day Center and costs related to upgrading either facility so that a strategic decision about the use of both buildings could be made before the end of the use restrictions.

The process to have a third party evaluation of the programs was put on hold due to the unique operating conditions created/implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, new practices were piloted as part of Operation Shelter to Home to improve performance across the homeless crisis response system, and the successful practices and lessons learned will be incorporated into future state programming.

6. Adequate Staffing to Support the Community Action Plan

A Project Manager was identified for Plan implementation to keep the process on track, and to provide support to senior staff.