



Staff Reports

File #: 230-2020, **Version:** 1

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council
From: Vincent Smith, Community Development Director
Prepared By: Lark Ferrell, Housing Manager

TITLE:
Update on Homeless System

RECOMMENDED ACTION:
Receive report providing an update on the homeless system.

DISCUSSION:
This item provides City Council with an update on the homeless system.

Background

The City of Napa (the “City”) and the County of Napa (the “County”) have historically partnered with each other to address the needs of homeless individuals and families. The City’s Police Department has taken the lead on homeless outreach and encampment clean-up activities while the County has funded specialty mental health services and drug and alcohol recovery services for vulnerable individuals and families. Since 2015, the City and the County have each funded 50% of year-round shelter operating costs and the County has funded 100% of winter shelter operations. The City and County worked with national homeless experts, Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) and National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH), to redesign the community’s homeless system in order to implement national best practices including moving to a housing-focused system which prioritizes assistance to the community’s most vulnerable. The relationships, roles and system strategies are formalized in a Cooperative Joint Powers Homeless Services Agreement between the City and County.

Since 2016, significant progress has been made to implement CSH and NAEH’s recommendations. This includes reducing barriers to shelter entry, bringing new resources to the community to help provide supportive and housing services to homeless families and individuals, and embedding permanent supportive housing units into new affordable housing developments. Additionally, Abode Services was hired to be the community’s homeless services provider with responsibilities for shelter operation, homeless outreach, and housing location and support, and a joint City/County Homeless Coordinator position was created.

Update on Current Activities

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic requiring the Homeless Coordinator to be redeployed to the County's Emergency Operations Center, the County's Director of Housing and Homeless Services Division has assumed responsibility for the coordinator and will provide Council with an update on the homeless system.

The update will include information on the 2020 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count. The PIT count is an annual count required for communities to receive homeless funding from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This funding flows through Continuums of Care (COC). The Napa COC is a regional collaboration of local non-profit and government providers which plans, organizes and delivers housing and services to meet the homeless needs of the community. Currently both the Housing Division and Police Homeless Outreach team have staff serving on the COC Board. The County serves as the administrative and fiscal entity for Napa's COC.

The PIT count is not the only source for data on homelessness in Napa County as the County also oversees the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) on behalf of the COC. This system provides much more in-depth, real time data for the clients opting to receive services. In 2020, HMIS data was used to redesign the PIT count to better align the count with the actual clients served through the year. Rather than just targeting areas known to be "hot" spots for homelessness, a larger number of teams canvassed the entire County in order to conduct a more thorough count than in past years. The total number submitted to HUD for 2020 was 464. While this is a significant increase from 2019's PIT count of 323, when comparing past and current HMIS data to PIT count numbers, the 2020 PIT count appears to be a more thorough count of the homeless population.

The County's Director of Housing and Homeless Services will also provide Council with an update on the actions taken to help protect the homeless during the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes establishing isolation and quarantine facilities, a prevention motel, and keeping the winter shelter open year-round to provide shelter for the community's homeless.

Next Steps

In addition to continuing to provide additional shelter and isolation options for the community's homeless during the COVID-19 pandemic, future actions include expanding shelter beds at the South Napa Shelter, exploring opportunities to increase permanent supportive housing units, and expanding outreach and camp clean-up coordination.

FINANCIAL IMPACTS:

This agenda item is informational and does not result in a financial impact without future Council action.

CEQA:

The Community Development Director has determined that the Recommended Action described in this Agenda Report is not subject to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(c).

DOCUMENTS ATTACHED:

None

NOTIFICATION:

Napa County, Abode Services and the Napa Continuum of Care were notified of this agenda item.