



Gateway
to the
Pinnacles



August 1, 2018

The Honorable Judge Stephanie E. Hulsey Presiding Judge, Superior Court
County of Monterey
240 Church Street
Salinas, CA 93901

Re: City of Soledad's Response to the 2017-2018 Monterey County Civil Grand Jury Final Report – "Who's in charge? Stepping up on Homelessness in Monterey County"

Dear Presiding Judge Hood:

This letter will serve as the City Council of the City of Soledad's response in regards to the Findings and Recommendations of the 2017-2018 Monterey County Civil Grand Jury Final Report – "Who's in charge? Stepping up on Homelessness." As requested by the Civil Grand Jury, the City of Soledad respectfully submits the following responses to the Findings and Recommendations F1-F12 and R1-R10 as identified for a response in the Report.

Civil Grand Jury's Report – Findings

Finding 1 – *Homelessness is a bigger problem in the County than the biennial homeless census would suggest.*

Response: The City Council agrees with this finding.

Finding 2 – *The County's homeless problem has the potential to get worse if we do not invest in accessible housing solutions. Growing housing insecurity will only increase demand on our unfunded, over stressed public services.*

Response – The City Council agrees with this finding.

Finding 3 – *The County's strategy for addressing homelessness needs a clearer focus, accountable leadership, and enhance capacity.*

Response – The City Council agrees with this finding.

Finding 4 – *Structuring the Continuum of Care administrator as a 501©3 nonprofit organization is conducive to securing funding and coordinating homeless services. However, a nonprofit organization cannot establish public policy and planning needed to end homelessness.*

Response – The City Council agrees with this finding.

Finding 5 – *The County has unofficially established the Coalition of Homeless Service Providers as the central organization for addressing homelessness. Making any nonprofit the center of homeless solutions effectively creates perception there is governmental leadership when there is, in fact no formal political leadership. This arrangement provides elected officials with a way to avoid accepting political responsibility for addressing homelessness.*

Response – The City Council agrees with this finding.

Finding 6 – *The Coalition of Homeless Service Providers is a small nonprofit that does not have sufficient capacity to administer the County's strategic plan to end homelessness and its continuum of care for both Monterey and San Benito counties. It does not provide political leadership to coalesce public support and government commitments around a concrete action-plan to end homelessness.*

Response – The City Council agrees with this finding.

Finding 7 – *The composition of the Leadership Council and its location within the Coalition of Homeless Service Providers has affected the focus of the leadership council. The Leadership Council's critical opportunity of generating and executing a strategic plan to end homelessness has narrowed to providing oversight of the Continuum of Care.*

Response – The City Council agrees with this finding.

Finding 8 – *The structure of the Leadership Council does not provide authority to design and execute a regional plan to end homelessness, and it does not support full public accountability for meeting stated targets*

Response – The City Council agrees with this finding.

Finding 9 – *Political leadership is necessary to secure public support, enact policy and planning decisions that capitalize on state legislation, and execute a regional homeless plan.*

Response – The City Council agrees with this finding.

Finding 10 – *Government decision-making is essential for making choices about resource commitments.*

Response – The City Council agrees with this finding.

Finding 11 – *To meaningfully change the course of homelessness and housing insecurity, there must be a regional approach to homelessness and the creation of a new governing body with the power to oversee implementation of the plan.*

Response – The City Council agrees with this finding.

Finding 12 – *The strategic plan to end homelessness serves as an informal guide rather than a definitive regional plan. It needs to be updated and fully implemented.*

Response – The City Council agrees with this finding.

Civil Grand Jury Report – Recommendations

Recommendation 1 – *Elected County and City officials should provide government leadership to address homelessness.*

Response – The recommendation has not been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. In addition, the City Council supports the recommendation.

Recommendation 2 – *The County and its Cities should form an accountable leadership body that has the power to oversee a regional approach to ending homelessness and address housing insecurity in Monterey County.*

Response – The recommendation has not been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. A regional approach would take months to form an actual structure, However, that isn't to say that actions cannot begin sooner between Cities and the County.

Recommendation 3– *The County and its Cities should enter into a binding, enforceable agreement, such as a Memorandum of Agreement, to secure commitment to the plan and ensure responsibilities of each jurisdiction.*

Response – The recommendation has not been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. A regional approach would take months to form an actual structure, However, that isn't to say that actions cannot begin sooner between Cities and the County.

Recommendation 4 – *The Lead me Home Leadership council should clearly define its purpose and goals.*

Response – The City Council agrees with the recommendation. However, at this time Cities and the County can only provide leadership to help facilitate the desired outcome.

Recommendation 5 – *There should be a clear distinction between governance of the Continuum of Care---as an integral part of the broader strategic plan—and the leadership body charged with implementing a regional strategic plan to end homelessness.*

Response – The City Council agrees with the recommendation. However, at this time Cities and the County can only provide leadership to help facilitate the desired outcome.

Recommendation 6 – *If the County effectively exerts control of the Coalition for Homeless Service Providers through the Leadership Council, then the County should clearly define the purpose and role of the Coalition for Homeless Service Providers. It also follows that the Coalition for Homeless Service Providers should be adequately funded and staffed in proportion to its level of responsibilities with respect to securing resource and performing services for the county.*

Response – The City Council agrees with the recommendation.

Recommendation 7 – *The newly created leadership body (see R2) should update and implement a regional strategic plan to end homelessness by defining its purpose, goals and assessments to measure and track progress.*

Response – The recommendation has not been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. A regional approach would take months to form an actual structure, However, that isn't to say that actions cannot begin sooner between Cities and the County.

Recommendation 8 – *The strategic plan should be revisited annually using outcome measurements to evaluate and adjust strategies for meeting goals.*

Response – The City Council agrees with the recommendation.

Recommendation 9 – *Reports that assess which goals are, or are not, being met should be generated and made publicly available.*

Response – The City Council agrees with the recommendation.

Recommendation 10 – *The new regional leadership body should produce a transparent consolidated budget to maximize resources and identify expenditures. All municipalities should demonstrate their commitment to the regional plan and end homelessness in an equitable or proportionate manner.*

Response – The City Council agrees with the recommendation. However, equitable and proportionate needs to be clearly defined.

Respectfully submitted,



Fred J. Ledesma

Mayor-for and on behalf of the City Council of the City of Soledad