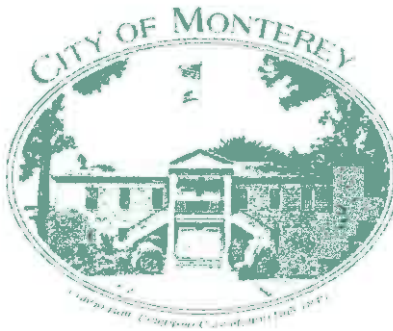




September 12, 2018

Honorable Stephanie E. Hulse
Judge of the Superior Court
Salinas Courthouse
240 Church Street
Salinas, CA 93901

Re: 2017-2018 Monterey County Civil Grand Jury Final Report -- "Who's in Charge? Stepping up Homelessness: The need for strategic leadership and comprehensive planning"

Dear Judge Hulse,

This letter is written in response to the Monterey Civil Grand Jury Final Report - "Who's in Charge? Stepping up Homelessness: The need for strategic leadership and comprehensive planning." As per the letter dated June 4, 2018 sent to Monterey in care of Mayor Clyde Roberson regarding the report, this letter shall serve as the response to that report pursuant to Penal Code section 933.05. The responses contained in this correspondence were approved by the City of Monterey City Council at its regular meeting of September 4, 2018.

Our comments follow in the order that they were presented in the report. The actual report language is displayed in **bold** type for readability.

FINDINGS

F1. Homelessness is a bigger problem in the County than the biennial homeless census would suggest.

Response: The City Council agrees with the finding. Monterey does not track or have a more accurate count of the number of individuals experiencing homelessness within Monterey.

F2. 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 underfunded, over-stressed public services.

Response: The City Council agrees that additional investments are needed to make housing more accessible, and that growing housing insecurity will increase demand on underfunded, over-stressed public services.

F3. The County's strategy for addressing homelessness needs a clearer focus, accountable leadership, and enhanced capacity.

Response: The City Council agrees with this finding. Strong leadership on a countywide basis is crucial to adequately address the issue.

F4. Structuring the Continuum of Care administrator as a 501(c)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.

F5. The County has unofficially established the Coalition of Homeless Service Providers as the central organization for addressing homelessness. Making any non-profit the center of homeless solutions effectively creates the 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 partially disagrees with this finding. The City Council agrees that the County has established the Coalition of Homeless Service Providers (CHSP) as a mechanism to address homelessness and that addressing homelessness requires political leadership and collaboration between governmental agencies, non-profits, and service providers. However, the City Council does not agree that the arrangement provides elected officials a way to avoid accepting political responsibility for addressing homelessness. Nevertheless, the city is interested in collaborating with regional partners and the county to identify a more effective leadership structure.

F6. 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 and acknowledges that regional, political leadership is essential to make meaningful progress on homelessness.

F7. 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 partially disagrees with this finding. The Leadership Council was influential in the drafting *Lead Me Home, the 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness*. The stated Mission of CHSP is "to eliminate homelessness in Monterey and San Benito Counties by promoting interagency coordination to develop and sustain a comprehensive system of housing and support services designed to maximize the self-

sufficiency of individuals and families.” The City Council agrees that because of the many facets necessary to coordinate resources to develop a system of homeless assistance, much work remains to be done and will require an even greater focus.

F8. 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.

F9. 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.

F10. Government decision-making is essential for making choices about resource commitments.

Response: The City Council agrees with this finding.

F11. 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 partially agrees with this finding. Each jurisdiction must dedicate resources and develop a plan for their unique homeless populations, but the city of Monterey finds that there is need for regional JPA that would provide political leadership and resources is important. If other jurisdictions and the county are willing to be equal partners in meeting this challenge, we are supportive of this approach.

F12. 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.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. Elected County and City officials should provide government leadership to address homelessness.

Response: While much work remains, the City Council and staff have accomplished a number of initiatives designed to help homeless persons in the city of Monterey transition to a more stable situation. The City Council regularly updates two major policy documents that identify housing issues, needs, policies, and programs: the Housing Element and the Consolidated Plan. Monterey's Planning Office and Housing Programs Office staff implements and administers the policies and programs on a regular basis.

The policies and programs seek to enhance available housing opportunities and fulfill the community service needs for: low, moderate, and workforce-income households; disabled persons; senior citizens; persons at risk of homelessness; and other special needs populations. Housing Office programs include: purchasing, rehabilitating, selling, and/or managing affordable ownership and rental housing; encouraging and facilitating first time home purchases; administering public service grants, and administering rehabilitation grants and loans. Planning staff implements programs that contribute to and preserve the City's affordable housing stock. These programs include the City's short-term rental ban, inclusionary housing ordinance, density bonus ordinance, and allocating water to affordable housing projects.

The City maintains an inventory of over 550 deed-restricted affordable housing units, including approximately 375 rentals and 175 ownership units. The City recently partnered with affordable housing developers and completed an 18-unit development affordable to very-low income seniors and an 18-unit development affordable to low- and very low-income citizens. The City's purchase and resale program ensures that the City's deed-restricted affordable housing stock is preserved in perpetuity.

In the past three years, the City Council established a local Safe Parking program; administered a "Challenge Grant" program in conjunction with area cities; installed five parking meters dedicated specifically to collect donations to be used for helpful services to homeless individuals; and passed legislation that created a new emergency (homeless) shelter overlay zoning district. The City works with area non-profits to provide services to homeless. The City of Monterey's Recreation Department has had a long standing relationship with Community Human Services which provides support to homeless youth, and has worked with Pass the Word Ministries to provide weekly Saturday meal services at El Estero Park.

The Monterey Police Department (MPD) has engaged in multiple processes to assist in addressing homelessness issues. The MPD coordinates a monthly "Monterey Homeless Exchange" which includes the MPD and a myriad of governmental and non-governmental service providers to assist those identified as needing services. Individual cases are discussed so the team can tailor a way to address a program specific to that individual. The MPD coordinates a monthly "City Liaison Meeting" for first line supervisors in City Departments to discuss any issues surrounding homelessness to collaboratively develop solutions. The MPD has several officers assigned to the Community Action Team (CAT) to coordinate and assist with homelessness issues.

The MPD provides office space and support for members of the MPD Multi Disciplinary Outreach (MDO) team who are employed by other entities that are engaged in providing services via the on-going contacts that police agencies have with those in need. The MDO is composed of a member of the Monterey County Behavioral Health Mobile Crisis Team; a County Adult Protective Services Social Worker; a YWCA Domestic Violence

Advocate; and a CHOMP Homeless Navigator Social Worker. The MPD CAT works hand-in-hand with the MDO.

R2. 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 yet been implemented by the City of Monterey, but will be implemented in the future if there is willingness by other jurisdictions to form such a body. The City Council supports a regional approach to forming an accountable leadership body. There is no identified time frame.

R3. 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: This recommendation has not been implemented by the City of Monterey, but would be considered for implementation in the future, contingent upon the drafting of a memorandum of agreement and adoption by participating jurisdictions. The City supports an agreement for a regional approach. There is no identified time frame.

R4. The Lead Me Home Leadership Council should clearly define its purpose and goals.

Response: This recommendation is not under the purview of the City of Monterey to implement. The City Council supports the Lead Me Home Leadership Council clearly defining its purpose and goals.

R5. 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: This recommendation does not fall within the purview of the City of Monterey to implement. The City Council supports efforts to distinguish and define the differing roles of the various entities that implement the strategic plan.

R6. If the County effectively exerts control of 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 resources and performing services for the county.

Response: This recommendation does not fall within the purview of the City of Monterey to implement.

R7. The newly created regional 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 City Council supports the formation of a regional leadership body and will participate. There is no established timeline for this recommendation.

R8. The strategic plan should be revisited annually using outcome measurements to evaluate and adjust strategies for meeting goals.

Response: The City Council supports the Leadership Council revisiting the strategic plan on an annual basis and using outcome measures to evaluate and adjust strategies for meeting specific goals.

R9. Reports that assess which goals are, or are not, being met should be generated and made publicly available.

Response: The City Council supports the generation of publicly available reports that assess which goals are, or are not, being met.

R10. 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 to end homelessness in an equitable, or proportionate, manner.

Response: The City Council supports the commitment of all municipalities to the regional plan and all involvement should be fair and equitable.

The City of Monterey appreciates the work of the Civil Grand Jury in preparing this report on this important topic. We hope that this information addresses the Grand Jury's findings and recommendations. Please contact me if you have any questions or require additional information.

Respectfully,


Clyde Roberson
Mayor

DR:blg