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HOUSING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

October 8, 2020

Subject

Santa Clara County Community Plan to End Homelessness 2020-25

Recommended Action

1. Adopt draft resolution 20-04 recommending approval of the Santa Clara County Community Plan to End Homelessness 2020-25 to City Council for final endorsement.

Background

The Santa Clara County Community Plan to End Homelessness 2020-25 (Community Plan) reflects the voices of over 8,000 individuals reached across the County, and provides stakeholders with a common agenda that, if followed, will result in large collective impact. Many of the plan strategies are items that the Housing Division regularly advances, and some of which have been accelerated to implementation during this dynamic, uncertain environment created by the ongoing COVID- 19 pandemic. The Community Plan provides a county-level roadmap to address homelessness and its root causes, with local jurisdictions tailoring the roadmap to meet local needs. On August 25, 2020, the Board of Supervisors of Santa Clara County endorsed the Community Plan. Endorsement of the new Community Plan provides the City with a clear framework to keep implementing urgent strategies to address the homelessness crisis.

Community Plan to End Homelessness in Santa Clara County (2015-2020)

Five years ago, the City Council adopted the Community Plan to End Homelessness in Santa Clara County (2015-2020). Since the Plan's adoption, partners worked collectively to achieve several notable accomplishments, including:

- Helping nearly 9,000 households resolve their homelessness, representing over 14,000 people.
- Doubled the number of supportive housing units in Santa Clara County.

- Doubled temporary housing and emergency shelter capacity.
- Launched a new homelessness prevention system that now serves approximately 1,000 households annually.
- Led a community-wide campaign that successfully housed more than 1,600 veterans and engaged nearly 800 private landlords in the effort.
- Voters approved \$950 million to develop affordable housing through the 2016 Measure A Affordable Housing Bond and Destination: HOME raised another \$100 million in private contributions to support the implementation of this Community Plan. Destination: Home is a public-private partnership serving as the backbone organization for collective impact strategies to end homelessness in Santa Clara County, California.

Discussion

According to the 2019 Point-in-Time count, there are 9,706 individuals experiencing homelessness on any given night in Santa Clara County¹. The 2019 Point-in-Time count identified 159 individuals experiencing homelessness in Cupertino. Families with children, seniors, individuals with disabilities, veterans, youth and young adults are all represented in the county's diverse homeless population. More than 80% of these individuals are unsheltered—sleeping outside, in cars, or other places not meant for human habitation. It is expected that these numbers will increase over the coming months as the full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is felt.

Homelessness is the result of various social and economic systemic failures, many of which disproportionately impact communities of color, and are further being exacerbated by the public health crisis caused by the spread of COVID-19. The unprecedented challenges created by COVID-19 make a comprehensive response more urgent for both our neighbors living outdoors, as well as for our neighbors who find themselves on the brink of homelessness. Essential to a comprehensive response to ending homelessness is a focus on policies and programs that address racial inequity and aim to reverse the disproportionately high rates of people of color who are unhoused or on the brink of homelessness. In June 2019, Santa Clara County, Destination: Home, and other cities and non-profits, embarked on strategic planning and an extensive community engagement process to develop a new five-year Community Plan. The Community Plan, which is driven and adopted by the Santa Clara County Continuum of Care (CoC) is a planning requirement placed by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on CoC funding. The Continuum of Care (CoC) is a broad group of stakeholders dedicated to ending and

¹ 1 Applied Survey Research, "Santa Clara County Homeless Census & Survey Comprehensive Report 2019." 2019.
<https://www.sccgov.org/sites/osh/ContinuumofCare/ReportsandPublications/Pages/HomelessnessCensusandSurvey.aspx>

preventing homelessness in Santa Clara County. During the Community Plan development, community feedback was sought to identify successes and challenges in the homeless system of care, and to collect innovative and inspiring ideas about how to address homelessness generally countywide, and specifically for certain subgroups like youth and families. Together, staff from various agencies reached over 8,000 community members by convening opportunities to engage with people with lived experience of homelessness, subject matter experts, community members, and key stakeholders. This work resulted in 14 strategies that fall into three focus areas:

- Address the root causes of homelessness through system and policy change;
- Expand homelessness prevention and housing programs to meet the need; and
- Improve quality of life for unsheltered individuals and create healthy neighborhoods for all.

Despite the substantial progress made in creating an innovative, coordinated, and more comprehensive supportive housing system, the crisis continues to grow—nationally and locally. Further, the challenges faced in ending homelessness are compounded by COVID-19 and its disastrous impacts on the economy and local budgets.

City staff, together with County partners and Destination: HOME, have identified the Community Plan as a strong tool to address the issue of homelessness throughout Santa Clara County. Advancing the strategies in this report will require broad cross-sector alignment and collaboration, and significant investments and social innovation. Collaboration and innovation of this kind is best achieved through a collective impact model that leads to a common agenda shared by all. Representatives from the County and Destination: HOME will provide a presentation at the Housing Commission meeting.

Next Steps

The Santa Clara Community Plan to End Homelessness 2020-25 will be brought for City Council approval.

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Reviewed and Approved for Submission by: Benjamin Fu, Director of Community Development

Attachments:

A - Draft Resolution 20-04