



Camarillo City Council

AGENDA REPORT

Date: January 22, 2025

To: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers

From: Greg Ramirez, City Manager

Submitted by: Carmen Nichols, Assistant City Manager

Subject: Camarillo Homelessness Strategic Plan Update

BACKGROUND

On October 12, 2022, the Camarillo City Council approved an update to the 2021-2029 Housing Element, reinforcing the City's commitment to addressing homelessness through targeted solutions. This initiative includes Program 17, known as the "Homelessness Strategic Plan," which aims to develop emergency and transitional housing solutions for vulnerable populations based on the Ventura County point-in-time count.

Recognizing the need for a comprehensive, expert-driven approach, the City determined a consultant would be essential to help create an effective homelessness strategic plan. In March 2024, a Request for Proposal (RFP) was issued for this purpose, resulting in the receipt of five proposals. Following a thorough evaluation process, City staff recommended LeSar Development Consultants for the project. LeSar demonstrated a strong track record in homelessness strategies, including their successful work on similar plans for other municipalities.

On September 11, 2024, the City Council approved the contract with LeSar Development Consultants to develop Camarillo's Homelessness Strategic Plan. LeSar's approach incorporates data-driven analysis, community engagement, and measurable goals.

DISCUSSION

Plan Kick-Off and Key Priorities

The City of Camarillo's Homelessness Strategic Plan is intended to be a comprehensive project designed to develop a targeted and sustainable approach to address homelessness in Camarillo. On October 7, the City launched the Strategic Plan process with a project team that included staff from the City Manager's Office, Community Development, Public Works, and the Ventura County Sheriff's Office/Project Hope, facilitated by consultants from LeSar Development Consultants.

The project's scope includes the completion of defined deliverables and a framework for ongoing communication among project team members to maintain alignment on objectives and progress. The project's milestones are extensive, starting with a project charter which outlines roles, responsibilities, and the scope of work. During the kick-off meeting the project team also identified key project priorities including the following:

- **Actionable Plan:** Develop a practical and focused strategy with specific steps, timelines, and responsibilities for plan implementation, ensuring feasibility and avoiding unrealistic goals.
- **Diverse Housing Types:** Explore the creation of a variety of housing options to meet the unique needs of individuals experiencing homelessness.
- **Comprehensive Services:** Provide essential support services, including case management, mental health care, substance use treatment, job assistance, and life skills training.
- **Funding Plan:** Develop a comprehensive strategy to secure, allocate, and manage financial resources, focusing on identifying funding sources outside of the City's general fund to support and sustain project efforts.
- **Homelessness Prevention:** Implement strategies and programs to identify and support individuals at risk of homelessness.
- **Community Engagement:** Foster collaboration by engaging diverse stakeholders to gather input, build partnerships, and enhance support.
- **Communications Plan:** Establish a structured communication strategy to deliver consistent, transparent messaging to all stakeholders.
- **Data and Outcome Measures:** Define metrics and benchmarks to track progress, evaluate impact, and guide ongoing improvements.

Community Engagement Element

The community engagement element is a central focus of the Homelessness Strategic Plan, designed to foster collaboration, build community trust, and ensure that the strategies developed are reflective of the needs and perspectives of those impacted by homelessness. To achieve this, the plan includes multiple outreach initiatives, from community surveys and public events to interviews and focus groups that invite participation from a diverse array of stakeholders.

On December 5, the City hosted the first Community Input Session for the plan. Over 50 community members attended, representing diverse areas of the community, including persons with lived experience of homelessness. The session featured a brief presentation followed by dynamic round table discussions, allowing participants to explore and share insights on community strengths, opportunities, and strategic ideas in the areas of homelessness prevention, housing, and homeless services. The event fostered meaningful dialogue and collaborative input to guide the plan's development.

Throughout the planning process, two community surveys will be conducted. The first survey, open December 5 through the month of January, will gather initial community

input, identifying resident concerns, perceptions, and ideas regarding homelessness in Camarillo. The second survey, scheduled for May 2025, will seek feedback on the draft goals, allowing the community to review the strategic directions outlined. In addition to surveys, two public outreach events—one in-person on November 20 and one hybrid—are planned to provide the community with opportunities to discuss and contribute to the plan's goals, ask questions, and share ideas in a more interactive setting.

Engagement will also extend to targeted interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders, including individuals who have lived experience of homelessness. To facilitate this, City staff will partner with CSU Channel Islands, further enhancing the reach and depth of this engagement. Key stakeholders in the plan's development include:

- **Elected Officials**, whose vision and priorities for the community will guide the process and ensure that stakeholder perspectives are incorporated into decisions.
- **City Staff** across departments, ensuring alignment with municipal goals and existing resources.
- **County and Regional Partners**, fostering collaboration on a larger scale and tapping into county-level expertise and support networks.
- **Homeless Service Providers**, who bring specialized knowledge in serving this population, allowing for the integration of effective, on-the-ground practices.
- **Supportive Service Providers** (e.g., behavioral health, mental health, and substance use specialists), contributing expertise that addresses core issues related to homelessness.
- **Public Sector Services**, such as public housing authorities, school districts, human service agencies, and faith-based organizations, providing a broad support framework.
- **The General Public**, whose insights and involvement are critical for creating a plan that resonates with and gains support from the broader community.
- **Individuals with Lived Experience** of homelessness, whose input will help shape services, strategies, and outcomes that are both practical and compassionate.

Data Analysis

The data analysis for the Camarillo Homelessness Strategic Plan leverages a comprehensive set of data sources to build a nuanced understanding of homelessness trends, demographic profiles, service access, and resource gaps across the community. Key sources include the Ventura County Point-in-Time Count and data from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), which together reveal population shifts over five years and detail service participation and outcomes. These datasets provide critical insights into demographics of homeless individuals, allowing for an evaluation of service gaps and the effectiveness of current interventions.

Additional sources include Coordinated Entry System (CES) access points, Housing Inventory Count (HIC) Reports, and Voucher Data, which together illustrate geographic service distribution and highlight areas where housing resources may be underutilized or lacking. CES data will pinpoint the locations where individuals most frequently access

services, helping identify underserved areas. HIC data provides a snapshot of housing program types and capacities, while Voucher Data offers a demographic breakdown of utilization, pointing to strengths and potential gaps in housing accessibility.

Data on funding allocations, encampments, landlord engagement, and emergency rent relief will further refine the analysis. Funding data reveals past resource allocation priorities, helping to identify gaps and areas where reallocation could enhance outcomes. Encampment data, including location and demographics, will inform outreach strategies for unsheltered populations. Landlord engagement metrics and rent relief data offer insight into housing retention and prevention measures, supporting strategic decision-making to stabilize housing and prevent homelessness.

Additional Key Elements and Development Phase

The project is further structured to provide measurable outputs and outcomes, including an implementation plan with specific timelines and responsibilities, a comprehensive funding plan, and a communications strategy to deliver consistent updates to stakeholders. A data-driven evaluation process will be developed to measure the effectiveness of implemented actions, ensuring the plan's objectives support the City Council's goals for community enrichment, safety, and enhance quality of life in Camarillo.

The phased development of the Strategic Plan is anticipated to advance from an initial draft in May 2025 to a final ratified document by September 2025.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no budget impact as a result of this action.

CEQA DETERMINATIONS

City staff determined, in accordance with Section 15061 (b)(3) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, that this project is not subject to CEQA review because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that these services may have a significant effect on the environment.

RECOMMENDATION

Receive and file the report on the Homelessness Strategic Plan.

ATTACHMENTS

None

REFERENCE MATERIALS – AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW AT CITY HALL

None